

PERCEPTION OF HEALTH AND SAFETY IN SURFACE MINING OPERATIONS IN  
SUDBURY, ONTARIO: A STUDY OF TEMPORARY STAFFING AGENCY EMPLOYEES

By

Jordan Babando

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts (MA) in Sociology: Applied Social Research

The Faculty of Graduate Studies  
Laurentian University  
Sudbury, Ontario, Canada

© Jordan Babando, 2015

**THESIS DEFENCE COMMITTEE/COMITÉ DE SOUTENANCE DE THÈSE**  
**Laurentian University/Université Laurentienne**  
Faculty of Graduate Studies/Faculté des études supérieures

Title of Thesis Titre de la thèse	Perception of health and safety in surface mining operations in Sudbury, Ontario: A study of temporary staffing agency employees		
Name of Candidate Nom du candidat	Babando, Jordan		
Degree Diplôme	Master of Arts		
Department/Program Département/Programme	Sociology	Date of Defence Date de la soutenance	June 24, 2015

**APPROVED/APPROUVÉ**

Thesis Examiners/Examineurs de thèse:

Dr. Parveen Nangia  
(Supervisor/Directeur(trice) de thèse)

Dr. Jorge Virchez  
(Committee member/Membre du comité)

Dr. Tammy Eger  
(Committee member/Membre du comité)

Dr. Wayne Lewchuk  
(External Examiner/Examineur externe)

Approved for the Faculty of Graduate Studies  
Approuvé pour la Faculté des études supérieures  
Dr. David Lesbarrères  
Monsieur David Lesbarrères  
Acting Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies  
Doyen intérimaire, Faculté des études supérieures

**ACCESSIBILITY CLAUSE AND PERMISSION TO USE**

I, **Jordan Babando**, hereby grant to Laurentian University and/or its agents the non-exclusive license to archive and make accessible my thesis, dissertation, or project report in whole or in part in all forms of media, now or for the duration of my copyright ownership. I retain all other ownership rights to the copyright of the thesis, dissertation or project report. I also reserve the right to use in future works (such as articles or books) all or part of this thesis, dissertation, or project report. I further agree that permission for copying of this thesis in any manner, in whole or in part, for scholarly purposes may be granted by the professor or professors who supervised my thesis work or, in their absence, by the Head of the Department in which my thesis work was done. It is understood that any copying or publication or use of this thesis or parts thereof for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission. It is also understood that this copy is being made available in this form by the authority of the copyright owner solely for the purpose of private study and research and may not be copied or reproduced except as permitted by the copyright laws without written authority from the copyright owner.

## **Abstract**

This thesis explores the health, safety and training of temporary staffing agency employees working in surface mining operations, specific to Sudbury, Ontario. The study involves a qualitative approach that utilized one on one interviews, where participants were achieved through snowball sampling. Thematic analysis was employed through the careful review of the interview transcriptions in order to find common responses among the respondents. The commonalities of responses have identified numerous areas of concern that could be shared among other temporary staffing agency workers in surface mining. Themes identified include: precariousness, issues with training, workplace responsibility, individual and co-worker safety, unionization, and participation in health and safety. Participants have expressed problematic experiences within these themes that should be considered for further research and as areas for possible improvement by temporary staffing agencies.

## **Keywords**

Qualitative sociology, labour relations, temporary staffing agency, surface mining, Sudbury, health and safety, training, unionization, precariousness.

## Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the participants that informed this study and made this all possible. I would like thank my thesis committee for their great insight, guidance and other contributions towards the completion of this research. The members of my committee include Dr. Nangia, Dr. Virchez, and Dr. Eger. I also appreciate being a member of the Centre for Research in Occupational Safety and Health, to which I received additional guidance and contacts that additionally assisted me with me research. I would like to thank Dr. Roth and Dr. Kinsmen for their assistance in the early development of my thesis in terms of theory and methodology. I would like to also thank the United Steel Workers Union for their assistance in trying to get me access to mining property. Despite not being able to gain access to mining property, they made a great effort none the less. Lastly, I would like to thank the department of sociology at Laurentian University, as numerous department members offered guidance and encouragement.

# Table of Contents

<b>Abstract .....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>Acknowledgments.....</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>Preface .....</b>	<b>ix</b>
<b>Chapter 1 .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter 2 .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Literature Review .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Definition and Research Issues .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>The Rise of Contingent Work .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>The Occupational Health and Safety Act and Temporary Staffing Work .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Injuries in Contingency Work.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Issues with Training.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Voicing Health and Safety Concerns by Temporary Staffing Agency Workers .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Summary of Literature Review .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Chapter 3 .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Theoretical Considerations .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Epistemology and Ontology.....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Sociological Imagination .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Praxis and Interpretation .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Mapping Social Relations.....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Considerations of Karl Marx .....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Bureaucracy and Hierarchy in Temporary Staffing Agencies.....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Ulrich Beck and Anthony Giddens .....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Summary of Theoretical Considerations .....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Chapter 4 .....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Methodology .....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Population of Interest .....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Sampling Methods .....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Data Collection Tool .....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Variables .....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Analysis.....</b>	<b>40</b>

Ethical and Problematic Considerations.....	41
Chapter 5 .....	43
Results.....	43
Precariousness of Temporary Work .....	45
Various Issues with Training .....	47
Quality of Training.....	53
Training better at Client Companies.....	58
Responses to Responsibility.....	61
Problems with Co-Workers .....	66
Individual Job Safety .....	70
Having a Voice in the Workplace .....	71
Unionization .....	74
Improvements for TSAs.....	79
Reprisals.....	83
Final Thoughts .....	84
Chapter 6 .....	88
Discussion .....	88
Chapter 7 .....	99
Conclusion .....	99
Concluding Limitations.....	101
Recommendations .....	103
References .....	108
Appendix A .....	114
Appendix B.....	117
Appendix C.....	120
Appendix D .....	121
Appendix E.....	122
Appendix F.....	123

## List of Tables

<b>Table 1: Variables of Interest for my Research .....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Table 2: Organization Identification Codes .....</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>Table 3: Relevant Themes and Frequencies .....</b>	<b>44</b>

## List of Figures

<b>Figure 1: Mapping of Social Relations in TSA Work .....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Figure 2: Business Relations of Temporary Staffing Agencies .....</b>	<b>33</b>



## Preface

Previous to my university studies, and even during the summer months throughout my undergraduate studies, I had spent over eight years working for a temporary staffing agency (TSA). This type of organization has a large range of employment tasks, workplace and safety training, working locations, and numerous employers. The majority of my past work experiences in this type of employment have been in the surface mining operations section, and while this is a specific work sector, the job tasks and associated problems have varied considerably (for a definition please see *Appendix D*). It is from my experiences in this field of work that has led me to discover many unaddressed questions and problems in relation to workplace safety and responsibility, although it was my focus to inquire specifically within the area of surface mining. It is my hope that this study will help provide some suggestions for meaningful change in this unique work sector. As a final note, I have a great amount of respect for this form of work that I had been a part of for such a long time. Working for a TSA has allowed me to gain valuable experience and knowledge, and I therefor only hope that this study will help direct some improvements and not condemn these companies.

## Chapter 1

### Introduction

Mining is an important industry worldwide and an essential aspect of the global economy as the metals refined and processed are used in various forms of production and construction (Donoghue, 2004; Groves, Kecojevic & Lomljenovic, 2007). Canada is seen as a land containing many natural resources and is the number one producer of numerous minerals (Haldane, 2013). Mining and minerals processing is a staple industry of Sudbury, Ontario. Sudbury is considered a world class mining centre with over 6,000 workers employed in mining (City of Greater Sudbury, 2012; DeStefano, 2008). Additionally, Sudbury has over 10,000 people employed throughout more than 300 mining support companies. Ontario is a leader in nickel ore mining and processing, most of which is done in Sudbury (Government of Ontario, 2014). Mining in Ontario is a large part of the economy as mining production accounted for \$10 billion in 2011 (Government of Ontario, 2014). Despite numerous efforts in the mining industry, the incidence of injuries in mining are significantly high by government standards (Donoghue, 2004; Groves, Kecojevic & Lomljenovic, 2007). The Ministry of Labour (2014) further reveals that the incidence of injuries and fatalities has not greatly improved in Ontario's mining sector. The Ministry reported a slight decline in critical injuries, although the decrease has not been significant. More needs to be done in order to improve the incidence of injury in the mining sector.

Health and safety is an important topic as there are risks involved with noise, dust, vibration, chemicals, heat, ergonomics and physical injury within the mining sector (Donoghue, 2004). Problems also arise as Canada's mining workers are much older and retiring in large

numbers, which leaves a workforce that is mainly comprised of young and inexperienced workers (Galarneau, 2010; Haldane, 2013). Problems have additionally been associated with a rise in the use of non-standard forms of work such as the use of temporary staffing agency (TSA) workers in the mining industry (Kalleberg, 2000) and this is the focus of my research.

The objective of this study is to gain the perceptions of health, safety and training of temporary staffing workers in Sudbury's Ontario's surface mining sector. This report is broken down into numerous chapters. *Chapter 2* will discuss the past literature and its influence on this study. This section will discuss the rise of contingent forms of work over a short period of time, the issues that are presented by the definition of temporary staffing agencies in research, training and TSAs, the prevalence of injuries within contingent forms of work, problems presented with the training of temporary staffing workers, and the problem of temporary staffing agency workers being unable to voice their concerns in the workplace.

In *Chapter 3* I will discuss the theoretical aspects of my research. In this section I will explain my epistemological and ontological perspectives for my research which are interpretivist and reflexive. A large part of my research is influenced by C. Wright Mills' sociological imagination which will be explained. I will discuss the implications of my research as a form of praxis and how I have interpreted the interview responses of respondents. Gary Kinsman's suggestion for the mapping of social relations in struggle is engaged with regarding my research problem. In my opinion there is no research on labour that should not involve and explore the work and theory of Karl Marx. Marx is likely the largest theoretical influence on my research. I then engage with the work of Max Weber regarding the relation of his notion of the iron cage of bureaucracy to that of temporary staffing agencies. The final section of the theoretical considerations in that of Ulrich Beck and Anthony Giddens. I will discuss Beck in terms of his

theoretical analysis of the evolving degradation of work and the Brazilianization of North America and discuss Giddens in relation to risk and globalization.

*Chapter 4* will discuss my methodology. In this section I will explain my population of interest, my sampling methods and my data collection tool. I will explain how my analysis was conducted and the ethical considerations associated with my research.

*Chapter 5* will show all my results and analysis, all of which have been broken down into relevant themes. The results of my research and its connection to the literature will be discussed in *Chapter 6*. The final section will be my concluding statements, which are found in *Chapter 7*. This section will also cover the limitations of my study and recommendations.

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

The following literature review will not only discuss what past research has found, it will also act to help explain my research topic and related concepts. Past research on the topic has been almost non-existent, especially in terms of the specific geographical region of Sudbury, Ontario. The lack of research could likely be a product of the lack of understanding or broad definition of temporary staffing agency work, which will be discussed within this literature review. It is also important to point out that I use temporary staffing agency work and contingency work interchangeably since past research either uses one term or the other. Temporary staffing agency work is part of the much broader definition of contingency work. In this case I have used the same term that was used by the author in the specific literature that I discuss.

The increased search by employers for a more flexible and exploitable workforce has led to the creation, expansion, and reliance of contingent forms of work. As forms of contingent work have become more prevalent, so too has the increase in health and safety issues attached to these forms of work. Contract workers represent one third of mining workers, although their representation within those injured in the mining sector account for more than their proportion (Gunningham, 2008: 349). Furthermore, among these contingent workers, Connelly and Gallagher (2004) suggest that temporary staffing agency workers are the most visible form of contingent workers, and this may also hold true for those in the surface mining industry. The following literature will discuss the issues with health and safety with contingent work and the various problems that exist. The major relevant themes in this literature review include a need for

a better operationalized definition of the contingent workers involved in research, that health issues are related to stress and anxiety, that safety issues are surrounded in problems with workplace knowledge and training, that workers lack the ability to voice their health and safety concerns, and the relationship between TSAs and unions. All these issues will be explored throughout the past literature discussed in this review, although a quick discussion of the rise of contingent forms of work and the use of such workers is necessary.

## Definition and Research Issues

Connelly and Gallagher (2004), Johnstone et al (2005) and Kalleberg (2000) all point out that one of the major problems in health and safety research of contingent workers is the lack of a clear distinction between contract workers and those contracted to workplaces (i.e., temporary staffing agency workers). Contingent work is defined by the United States Bureau of Labour Statistics as any form of employment that is either short-term contract based or where working hours are short and irregular (Polivka, 1996). Polivka (1996) recognizes temporary staffing agencies as part of this definition, although those who work for such agencies regularly for over a year are not considered under this definition. With this operationalization of contingent work, employees at temporary staffing agencies can be compared between those that work regularly for an extended period with those who work sporadically. Polivka however, also recognizes temporary staffing agency employees as alternative workers along with contractor and on-call employees. The definitions here are very broad for the sake of my study and in which case contingency work has been included as part of the definition of the sample population while also being more specific than Polivka.

The purpose of Cummings and Kreiss' (2008) article is to give a definition of a contingent worker and evaluate the issues related to such work. While the issues they cover vary, only those specific to this study of health, safety and training will be discussed here. According to Cummings and Kreiss (2008), contingent workers are those that have "arrangements in which the worker has a non-traditional relationship with the worksite employer" (448). Temporary staffing agencies also fall within this definition. In the United States, contingent forms of employment have rapidly increased (Johnstone et al., 2005; Middleton, 1996-1997) and temporary staffing agency employment increased 10 times more rapidly than the total workforce from 1982 to 1990 (Cummings & Kreiss, 2008). Johnstone et al. (2005) and Middleton (1996-1997) found that women have come to represent the majority of contingent work. However, this is unlikely the case in regards to contingency work in the mining sector. In 2005, contingent workers in the United States represented one third of the American workforce and involved 43 million workers (Cummings & Kreiss, 2008). Contingent workers are mainly white, over 25 years of age and have few benefits and low wages. Cummings and Kreiss also found that some contingent workers are exempt from various protective laws. One of the primary reasons for the exemption is due to such laws being enacted before the rise of contingent work (Cummings & Kreiss, 2008).

Connelly and Gallagher (2004) found that the research focusing on the consequences of contingent work have increased alongside the increase prevalence of contingent work, although Quinlan (1999) suggests that such research has not been enough. Quinlan also believes that the sociologists researching contingent work are often ignorant of occupational health and safety. This can likely be solved by the suggestions of Holloway (2003) who believes that research should be done from the bottom up, involving and researched by those from within the problem.

My long experience and involvement as a TSA worker removes much of the ignorance that Quinlan (1999) has mentioned and allows me to know which questions to ask that would otherwise be missed by other researchers.

Research topics for contingent work has been similar to that of part-time work, although research done in both areas have provided contrasting results (Connelly & Gallagher, 2004). Results vary in the study of contingent work, in large part due to the varying types of contingent work being studied (Connelly & Gallagher, 2004) and due to the inconsistent definitions (Kalleberg, 2000). This is an important reason why the participants of this study have to be defined much better than simply labelling them as contingent workers or as temporary staffing agency workers. While this research's population of interest fall between both labels, a more precise and clear definition will likely help remove any confusion when comparing findings with those of past or future research.

It is suggested that health specific research of contingent workers have focused more on mental and emotional health issues (Connelly & Gallagher, 2004). Some studies have shown that contingent workers report more issues related to stress and anxiety than permanent workers while other studies have shown the opposite (Connelly & Gallagher, 2004; Cummings & Kreiss, 2008). These contrasting results are suggested to have come from a poorly operationalized definition of the contingent worker sample population (Connelly & Gallagher, 2004). Health seems to be rarely discussed in the literature in the majority of the studies that have been reviewed on health and safety. Instead such studies have focused on safety and injuries and categorized these two themes under health and safety.



## The Rise of Contingent Work

Kalleberg's (2000) article is a literature and theoretical review of past work accomplished surrounding the topic of nonstandard forms of work, although for the purpose of my own research I have mainly concentrated on Kalleberg's (2000) discussion of temporary staffing agency workers. Temporary staffing agencies are unique among other forms of nonstandard work since employees will establish connections with multiple employers and can leave such workers detached from any particular employer (Kalleberg, 2000). Temporary staffing agencies are employers who are specifically responsible for the screening, hiring, and firing of employees that will be contracted out on an hourly basis to employers in temporary need of workers (Kalleberg, 2000). The problems surrounding temporary staffing agencies has led countries to take sides, either by including temporary staffing agencies with some regulations, or banning them all together. Temporary staffing agency workers are alienated from their co-workers by being placed on multiple and varying job sites (Kalleberg, 2000). This is a problem since the relationship between co-workers in terms of health and safety is important. Feeling that your co-workers work safely and support safe working practices has been associated with safer workplaces (Turner, Chmiel, Hershcovis, Sandy & Walls, 2010). Temporary employees are also alienated from the full-time workers at jobs sites in the attempt by employers to keep the temporary employees free from the influence of their full-time workers (Kalleberg, 2000). Other literature also shows that contingent forms of work and their use have greatly increased over the years.

The majority of workers during the twentieth century were employed at their employers place of work, under their employers supervision, and work was full-time and indefinite (Connelly & Gallagher, 2004; Kalleberg, 2000). More currently, Quinlan and Bohle (2004) point out that work in Canada and the United States have been shifting towards an increase in alternative and nonstandard forms of work, and according to Zeytinoglu (1999) one of the popular choices for these types of work is short-term contract work. Johnstone et al. (2000-2001), Kalleberg (2000) and Kochan et al. (1994) also point to the historical increase of contingent work, specifically with temporary staffing agencies. Temporary staffing agencies in the United States have increased annually by 11 percent between 1972 and 1998 while the annual employment rate has only increased by about 2.5 percent. In Canada, the use of temporary staffing agency workers has increased by 3 percent from 2005 to 2009 (Galarneau, 2010). These increases are having grave consequences for health and safety and according to Johnstone et al. (2000-2001) the literature supporting this phenomenon is growing.

Research by Connelly and Gallagher (2004) reviewed the literature concerning fixed term contract work. It has been found that various workplaces have been placing an increased emphasis on the direct and brokered hiring of fixed term, temporary or contingent workers (Connelly & Gallagher, 2004; Johnstone et al., 2000-2001; Johnstone et al., 2005). The research of Connelly and Gallagher (2004) point to the possible paths for future research in the area by examining what has already been done and what questions have been left unanswered.

### **The Occupational Health and Safety Act and Temporary Staffing Work**

According to the Ministry of Labour (2015), temporary staffing agency employees have all the same rights as all other employees as outlined in the Occupational Health and Safety Act

(OHSA) (Ministry of Labour, 2003). The three main rights that employees have are as follows: the *right to know* about any unsafe conditions or hazards that exist in the workplace such as through the Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS); the *right to participate* in health and safety in their workplace such as joining a health and safety committee; and the *right to refuse* unsafe work, dangerous working conditions or work that they are unsure about (Ministry of Labour, 2015b). Employees have rights although they also have responsibilities that include wearing proper personal protective equipment, working safely, and to report any hazard or unsafe working conditions (Ministry of Labour, 2015b). Employers also have responsibilities under the OHSA that include providing training and supervision that will help protect a worker, notify employees of any hazards, and take every reasonable precaution necessary in order to protect workers from any harm and hazard (Ministry of Labour, 2003). These are all aspects of the Ministry of Labour's (2015) Internal Responsibility System, which explains that all employers, supervisors and workers at a job site have different responsibilities for health and safety. Unfortunately there is a lack of clarity in recognizing who the "employer" is in the case of temporary staffing workers, and has caused confusion for both workers and employers.

For greater clarity, the ministry sets out specific rights and obligations for temporary staffing agency workers, employers, and clients on the ministry website (Ministry of Labour, 2015). While the additional discussion helps clarify some common uncertainties, the additional information still remains quite vague and lacks context. According to this section, both employment agencies and client companies share the responsibility for informing and protecting temporary staffing workers from various hazards. This does not clarify which party supplies the training since training in my experience has come from either the client company or the staffing

agency and rarely as a joint effort. Furthermore, this section does not specify who is directly responsible under various circumstances when an injury occurs. In the case where an injury occurs, this section advises the employee to notify first aid, the staffing agency and the client company of the injury (Ministry of Labour, 2015). Both the client and temporary staffing employers are to communicate certain injuries to the necessary parties such the Ministry of Labour (Ministry of Labour, 2015). In terms of employer reprisals or threats towards temporary staffing workers, it is illegal for both client and staffing agency employers to do so in response to an employee following the OHSA or exercising their rights as outlined in the act (Ministry of Labour, 2015). In the event that an employee feels they have had reprisals against them, then they may file a complaint with the Ontario Labour Relations Board (OLRB) and in which case an investigation may be provided against the employer (Ministry of Labour, 2015).

### **Injuries in Contingency Work**

Contingent workers were found by numerous studies to be greatly threatened by work related injuries. A study conducted in Spain found that contingent workers were twice more likely than non-contingent workers to suffer from both fatal and nonfatal injuries at work (Cummings & Kreiss, 2008: 448). Injuries likely occur since contingent workers are found to be less familiar with workplace safety and training related to dangerous job tasks. This parallels with a study from Spain which revealed that the prevalence of contingent worker injuries decreased with the amount of time spent on a particular task (Cummings & Kreiss, 2008). The analysis by Cummings and Kreiss, (2008) and Middleton (1996-1997) also found that contingent workers had less hours of safety and job specific training and a lack of proper personal protective equipment than non-contingent workers. The support for the above statement can be found by

Cummings and Kreiss (2008) from a United States study of the petrochemical industry. The study found that the increased injuries in the industry were largely linked to contingent workers that had relatively less training than the full-time employees (Cummings & Kreiss, 2008: 449). The support for the lack of proper safety equipment came from a study performed during the aftermath of hurricane Katrina. Contingent workers involved in the cleanup of the disaster were unaware of the safety equipment needed and were more likely to report not using proper safety gear (Cummings & Kreiss, 2008: 449). Research by Gunningham (2008) has found similar issues with safety training, although his research also suggests that employers rely on untrained personnel.

Past research specific to worker safety has largely discussed workplace employment practices that have relied heavily on poorly trained contingent workers to accomplish high risk work tasks (Connelly & Gallagher, 2004). There was an incident documented where a unionized employee refused to work on a loader since the fire suppression equipment was not functional, in which case the company requested a non-union employee to perform the duty (Gunningham, 2008). A similar example was provided by Middleton (1996-1997) where, during the construction of the Atlanta Sports Dome, contingent workers were offered more money to perform unsafe tasks and the situation led to a worker's death after falling from scaffolding. The literature reviewed by Cummings and Kreiss (2008) also support that problems exist with employers relying on contingent workers, specifically temporary staffing agencies, for high risk jobs. Gunningham (2008) further found that contingent workers are more likely to be involved in risky and hazardous tasks, and that such employees are less likely to report unsafe work out of fear of losing that contract (Quinlan, 1999; Gunningham, 2008). Gunningham (2008) notes that a study in Pilbara Australia found that employers were hiring contract workers for dangerous

tasks and not giving them enough time to finish the job safely (349). Furthermore, employees on that particular job avoided health and safety discussions out of fear of losing their job. The article by Kochan et al. (1994) uses a case study approach to understanding the health and safety issues with contingent work and has revealed more valuable information.

The research by Kochan et al. (1994) is a case study of contingent workers health and safety issues in the petrochemical industry. The study involved a sample of 309 petrochemical plants where both a random sample of managers, full-time workers, and contract workers were surveyed over the telephone. It was found that 4 out of every 5 managers surveyed reported an increase in the use of contingent workers (Kochan et al., 1994) which further support the above statements regarding the historical reliance and use of contingent workers. Their study further found that the majority of contract workers in the petrochemical industry are younger, less experienced, and less educated. Temporary staffing agencies offer companies more flexibility while also risking the health and safety of those workers (Kochan et al., 1994). Flexibility is made available to employers by allowing them to temporarily hire workers with their fluctuating business needs and by also being able to temporarily use expensive specialists for only short periods which leads to lower costs. The safety aspect is compromised since contract workers are less familiar with the worksites and lack adequate training. Kochan et al., (1994) use the example of a massive explosion at plastics plant in 1989 that killed 23 employees and was suggested to have been caused by a contract worker. Their analysis has concentrated more on a dual relationship of the contractor and the "host" or employer that workers are contracted to. Past research also points to a possible reason for the lack of contingent worker training.

## Issues with Training

A problem related to the lack of training and equipment comes from the confusion between contingent worker employers and companies that the contingent workers are contracted to. Cummings and Kreiss (2008) found that companies feel that the contingent contract companies should supply the training and equipment while the contingent employers felt that the companies contracting their workers should provide such things. The same confusion also exists regarding who is legally and ultimately responsible for the health and safety of the workers (Kalleberg, 2000; Kochan et al., 1994).

Kochan et al. (1994) found that employers do not wish to invest in the health and safety training of contingent workers since such workers are only working for a single particular employer for a short period of time (Kochan et al., 1994). Furthermore, there is ambiguity regarding who is responsible for providing the training to the contingent employees. Kochan et al. (1994) found that 54 percent of the workers involved in the survey reported that they had received up to two hours of training from their host employer, and those that were not unionized were twice as likely to not obtain any training. On this topic, the study concluded that contingent workers received less training over all in comparison to permanent employees. In regards to injury reporting, Kochan et al. suggest that there are problems with measuring and comparing injury rates since companies do not adequately record injuries from contingent workers who are contracted to them. In this case Kochan et al. (1994) recommend for better methods for recording injuries of contingent workers. Clearly from the above discussions there are issues in health and safety that are specific to contingent workers, which leads to a further question as to whether or not contingent workers have a voice in the workplace.

Workplaces have adopted a workplace that relies heavily on more flexible and nonstandard forms of work, such as TSA workers, for jobs that are more dangerous and risky (Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, 2002). TSAs are more likely to have poor job characteristics than other forms of employment (Virtanen et al., 2005) and in this case training should be an important aspect of research. Booth, Francesconi and Frank (2002) have found that TSA workers are less satisfied with the training they receive in comparison to permanent employees. This is partially due to the companies that use TSA workers and their perceived minimal obligation to train such employees and can be explained by the perceived lack of responsibility for such workers (Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, 2002). Furthermore, numerous hazardous jobs have also been shifted from full-time workers to those of more precarious forms of work such as TSA workers. It has been suggested by the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention that the risks involved with the changing structure of work should be looked at, and one of the areas for inquiry should involve employee health and safety training. The report by the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (2002) points out that future research needs to investigate health and safety training of contingent forms of work and how this training relates to perceptions and incidence of safety in the workplaces of such individuals.

There has been an erosion in on the job training due to the increase of temporary staffing agency work. This lack of induction and on the job training has left TSA workers at a greater risk for injury (Virtanen, Kivimaki, Joensuu, Virtanen, Elovainio & Vahtera, 2005). TSA workers are less likely to receive on the job training in comparison to those not working for TSAs and in the same industry (Kvasnicka, 2008; Booth, Francesconi & Frank, 2002). More formal training is not given since such training makes an employee more marketable and creates a risk of employees being poached by other companies (Kvasnicka, 2008). When TSAs offer training,



they normally provide very general forms of training and do not pay their employees an hourly wage (Autor, 2001). Meanwhile, employers find costs associated with training workers for short term jobs to be excessive which is a major factor in their use of TSAs (Howe, 1986; Mangum, Mayall & Nelson, 1985). When TSAs increase their training, they often do so out of expanded competition in order to make employees more marketable (Autor, 2001), although this does not necessarily translate into higher quality of training.

Many TSA workers are initially low skilled and choose to work for TSAs so that they can receive on the job training in hopes of becoming more marketable for permanent work (Mangum, Mayall & Nelson, 1985). Individuals who work for TSAs often do so in order to gain experience and skills that will make them appear more marketable for future job prospects (Howe, 1986), although what good is this if the quality of skills training is of poor quality? It should be concerning that TSA workers have been found to receive 9-12 less training days per year in comparison to full time employees (Booth et al., 2002) since a lack of training and instruction is a main factor in the frequency of injuries in TSA work (Fabiano, Curro, Reverberi & Pastorino, 2008). Increases in training and duration have been found to significantly decrease workplace injuries. Furthermore, the quality of training, specific to certain types of work, and in relation to health and safety, also greatly influence the occurrence of injuries (Fabiano, Curro, Reverberi & Pastorino, 2008).

### **Voicing Health and Safety Concerns by Temporary Staffing Agency Workers**

Aronsson's (1999) study focused on comparing short-term and long-term contract workers in terms of having a voice in the workplace. Short-term contract workers are referred to as contingent workers for the sake of Aronson's analysis. Following a review of the literature,

Aronsson (1999) found that it may be difficult for contingent workers to voice their concerns regarding poor working environments and workplace safety improvements. Aronsson also realized the possibility that, due to their short-term involvement with an employer, contingent workers may keep their opinions and critiques of their short-term work to themselves since they will not reap any long term benefits. To answer the question of whether or not there is a difference between the short-term and long-term workers in terms of their ability to voice workplace related concerns while also being heard, Aronsson (1999) looks at secondary data from Sweden's statistics department. Statistics Sweden had conducted a labour market survey with 15 percent of the sample representing those in temporary employment. Aronsson (1999) divided a sample of 1'564 from the survey equally among short-term and long-term contract workers and was made up of 55 percent females and 45 percent males.

The survey questions were regarding workplace knowledge, safety training, willingness to refuse unsafe work, if short-term work makes workers care less, and the worker's ability to voice concerns were evaluated to answer Aronsson's bigger question. The study found that contingent workers were more likely to report a lack of knowledge in their work environment and that they had a hard time being heard regarding workplace safety issues. The study also found that females were more likely to voice their problems in their workplace although their opinions and suggestions were less likely to be included in such discussions. Furthermore, the possibility that contingent workers may not voice their concerns from not caring about the workplaces they temporarily work at is not supported in the findings of this research (Aronsson, 1999).

The focus of Gunningham's (2008) article is on the Australian mining sector and explores the health and safety problems arising from increased precarious work and the lack of worker

participation in health and safety. Two of the main issues discussed are employee vulnerability and the undermining of unions. Unions are essential for the communication of employee needs in health and safety, although this has become a problem since union membership has been dwindling along with the increase of various forms of nonstandard employment (Johnstone et al., 2005; Gunningham, 2008). Workers who are unionized are more likely to discuss their health and safety concerns with their employers than non-unionized workers (Gunningham, 2008). The expansion of the contingent workforce is undermining the union's ability to promote and protect the health and safety in the workplace (Johnstone et al., 2005). Gunningham (2008) concluded that the nature of contingent work creates barriers for the promotion of health and safety and also places contingent workers in vulnerable positions. While the article provides a valuable description of the problem at hand, it still leaves questions as to how contingent workers themselves describe the problems and if they have any suggestions for the improvement of health and safety. Gunningham (2008) does recognize this need through his explanation that workers know the health and safety needs for their jobs more than anyone else and therefore need to be heard in terms of those needs. My research will capture the voices and needs of contingent workers and hopefully answer the questions that have been posed above.

## Summary of Literature Review

From all the above literature there was much to be considered and included in my own research. There is a large support in the literature for the need to properly and more adequately define the contingent workers focused on in research (Connelly & Gallagher, 2004; Johnstone et al., 2005; Kalleberg, 2000). The definitions of contingent workers and temporary staffing agency

workers by Cummings and Kreiss (2008), Kochan et al. (1994), and Polivka (1996) have proven useful in my own operationalization of the workers included in my study. Much of the past research have heavily shown numerous issues related to the health and safety of contingent work (Connelly & Gallagher, 2004; Cummings & Kreiss, 2008; Johnstone et al., 2000-2001; Kochan et al., 1994) and more specifically regarding lack of training and workplace knowledge (Gunningham, 2008; Middleton, 1996-1997). The information provided by Cummings and Kreiss (2008) suggest that TSA workers are threatened by injuries due to a lack of training and for being less familiar with their workplaces. Additionally, they suggested that TSA workers receive less training than permanent employees and of a lower quality. Aronsson's (1999) worked show a lack of voice for TSA workers and which may be a barrier for training improvements for TSAs. Furthermore, the lack of voice in the workplace can be attributed to the lack of unionization for TSAs (Johnstone et al., 2005; Gunningham, 2008). These findings point to a possible reason why contingent workers are at higher risk of injury than non-contingent workers and were considered in the development of my research. These are issues that I have personally experienced while working in the field, and the above research suggests that my own experience has not been an isolated event. Additionally, the issue of training and TSAs has not been addressed in surface mining operations, therefore the purpose of this study is to begin filling this research gap.

Kochan et al., (1994) have discussed the issue with training in relation to responsibility since the unique structure of TSA contracts make it difficult for various parties to determine who is responsible for providing training. It has been made clear here that training is an important area for inquiry and has helped in the development of research questions for this study. Questions that need to be addressed involve asking who pays for TSA worker training, who

provides TSA worker training, and how satisfied TSA workers are with the training they receive. Steps need to be taken to prevent future harm to workers and in such a case prevention can save lives (Ministry of Labour, 2014).

All of the previous literature has offered plenty of options and questions for my own research specific to the contingent workers from the surface mining industry here in Sudbury Ontario. It is clear from this literature that there is a lack of research on the health and safety of temporary staffing agency workers in the surface mining field, especially specific to the Sudbury region. The main question that I am trying to address then is: *what are the perceptions and experiences of health, safety and training according to temporary staffing agency employees working in Sudbury, Ontario's surface mining operations?*

## Chapter 3

### Theoretical Considerations

As previously mentioned, the main question that I am trying to address is: *what are the perceptions and experiences of health and safety according to temporary staffing agency employees working in Sudbury, Ontario's surface mining operations*. In trying to answer this question, it was useful to grapple with numerous meaningful and useful social theories which will be discussed in this section. For my epistemological and ontological considerations I find myself looking at Dorothy Smith and Karl Marx. This research begins with what Holloway (2003) has called the scream. I then look to theoretical aspects of praxis, which is a main goal of my research. Aspects of discourse are also explored, along with questions of interpretation. There is then an attempt to discuss the usefulness of mapping out the social relations of struggle, while also trying to map out this research in such a manner. Marx is focused on once again, specifically with his work on alienation and social relations. Weber and his theory of bureaucracies are also explored in relation to TSAs. Finally, the theories of Ulrich Beck in relation to his work on risk society and flexible work is discussed while making links to health and safety issues in the TSA industry.

#### Epistemology and Ontology

The epistemology for my thesis work will take on two parts. The first part will be interpretivist, which finds that people act according to the meanings to which they give their acts (Bryman, Teevan & Bell, 2009). Also, researchers can collect common sense thinking and interpret their actions based on such thinking (Bryman, et al. 2009). This has been accomplished

by completing interviews with participants that describe some common responses of the TSA workers in terms of their workplace perceptions. The responses from the interviews revealed common themes. Like that of Dorothy Smith (1999), this study has taken a reflexive epistemological approach, one that has an ontological view that the social world is produced through the social practices of actual people and that researchers are a part of this. Furthermore, knowledge should come from those who are being inquired about (Smith, 1999). In this sense, it is best to not produce knowledge that objectifies and reifies the social practices of people (Smith, 1999). Interviews were conducted where the questions have come from my own experiences and those of my past co-workers and the interviews help explain the social phenomena in question. I believe this method and such epistemologies have been useful to my research since much of the interpretation has been left up to the interviewees themselves.

This epistemological approach is why I have chosen research that is more qualitative in character, by interviewing actual people that experience and are directly affected by issues with health and safety in the mining surface industry. To have taken on a different epistemology such as positivism, then there would have been a risk of turning people and the social world into things, and would ignore the reality that "we" create the social world around us (Frampton, Kinsman, Thompson & Tilliczek, 2006).

John Hollow (2003) suggests that meaningful research should begin at the site of struggle and involve those who are within it and not external. Holloway (2003) calls this starting point the scream, which is our own and shared experiences of refusal and disjuncture. Holloway's (2003) suggestion is meaningful to my research since I have been within the problem that is being inquired about while also involving others who have shared similar experiences. As a former TSA employee I have experienced many problems related to the topics that I have inquired

about. I have inquired about my topic because I am concerned and displeased over the lack of investment that TSA's have towards health, safety, and training. This research is my way of following Holloway (2003), to refuse to accept the conditions that are imposed on TSA workers and to uncover them, and put the problems out in the open for everyone to see. It is from here that I move into the benefits of following the suggestions of Dorothy Smith.

Smith (1999) has provided a method of inquiry for the people and not for the ruling relations. Smith (1999) explains that we should recognize ourselves in the social world that we are inquiring about, since whether clear or not, researchers are all a part of the social world that they are inquiring about. The great part about this is that I am able to see where I am located within the site of inquiry, which will be explained further on when I discuss the mapping of social relations. Because researchers are participating in what they are writing about, it poses questions of objectivity (Smith, 1999). Stories can change depending on the standpoint of the storyteller and the researcher (Smith, 1999). For example, what if my research had been solely based on observation, or if I only interviewed managers rather than workers, the methods and interpretations can all affect the outcome. Managers would likely not be aware of all of the issues that their workers face. Furthermore, that which they are aware of will likely not be revealed by the TSA management. I personally believe management is aware of many of the issues, and continue to operate in such a manner and hide the truth in support of their own monetary gains and savings. In this case it is meaningful for researchers to take on the standpoint of the workers themselves. We need to begin from the standpoint of the workers, and it is only from here that relative and historical truths of peoples experiences can be uncovered (Smith, 1999). Workers are the ones who know their own experiences and struggles the best so why not begin here?



## Sociological Imagination

C. Wright Mills (1959) has provided a glorious piece of sociological text known as the Sociological Imagination. In this text, I have found some important and relevant aspects to be considered for this research. What I firstly take from Mills (1959) is his recommendation to recognize myself and my own personal situation with that of others. This is exactly one of the things that I have tried to accomplish in my own research. I have tried to make connections between what Mills (1959) calls personal troubles and public issues. Are my experiences and problems in the TSA industry simply specific to my own milieu, or are my problems and experiences shared with others? It was my anticipation and belief that I am not alone, and I wanted to see just how far my experiences are shared. Mills (1959) also suggests for researchers to make links between the personal, social, and political.

*"It is the political task of the social scientist—as of any liberal educator—continually to translate personal troubles into public issues, and public issues into the terms of their human meaning for a variety of individuals" (Mills, 1959: 187).*

From the statement above by Mills, researchers can take this link between personal, public, and political and turn it into praxis. My research and methods of inquiry do not simply centre on the everyday lives and experiences of people through my epistemology, it further does so through praxis. I strongly agree that, if we create the world than we can change it (Frampton, Kinsman, Thompson & Tilleczek, 2006). Mills (1959), despite being critical, has given me a method of praxis which he referred to as the "adviser to the king". It is believed that researchers can serve as advisors to the state; after all, can one imagine how the state may be run differently

if all politicians were sociologists? Conclusions to this question may prove different than my own although it would be interesting to see none the less. The problem that Mills (1959) points out is that sociologists are outnumbered by economists, risk-management experts, consultants and so forth, which sometimes causes sociologists to get lost in a politics of the market (Carroll, 2006). It is not the intention for this study to become consumed by the market, although my research and findings will hopefully be used to alter or create new policy at various levels of state and business practice. The real focus on praxis for this study comes from the work of Karl Marx and William Carroll.

### Praxis and Interpretation

Marx has shown how to make connections between activism and reflection and also between practice and theory (Carroll, 2006). In this case, theory can be applied and put into action. Furthermore, sociological praxis should also dig deep and get to the root causes of various social problems and injustices (Carroll, 2006). Carroll also points out that sociological praxis would likely have to make connections between various issues that are likely regarded as separate issues. Training, health, safety, and responsibility could also be treated by TSA management as distinct issues, although this is not necessarily the case. To reach the beginning of praxis in sociology I have gone back to Marx and his theses on Feuerbach where he states that:

*"The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to change it"* (Marx, 1845: 101).

This study has followed Marx's suggestion by not making the same mistakes that the philosophers have made. This research was not to produce meaningless knowledge, as I have involved those within the struggle to find possible solutions while also revealing their otherwise unheard issues. This research acts to give these workers a voice, hopefully one that reaches their employers, clients, community, and government. The voices in this study also have the possibility of being heard by others out there in the social world that live similar and shared experiences to which such information and knowledge may be of benefit to. When writing these experiences and to give the workers a voice, it becomes important then to consider such voices and how they have been included in this research and within this final report.

I did not wish to write about a conversation that has never taken place as Smith (1999) has mentioned. I believe that we should take care in how we report the responses of individuals and take care in actually including such voices. If we take up an epistemology that sees people as creating the social world around us, then we cannot ignore discourse since this is the basis of social life, after all, what social world would there be without meaningful and shared communication (Smith, 1999). Furthermore, all experiences are embedded in social organization and relations and are further embedded in discourse. What we need to do, according to Smith, is to get into a conversation of people's lives as they experience them. Discourse is also located in how we write our research and there must be care taken at this stage as well. Smith says that while qualitative inquiry captures people's actual experiences, most of it becomes lost at the stages of coding and interpretation. This study accomplished this by interviewing workers one on one and recording their actual conversations. I did not wish to interpret what, how, and why something was said, rather I have tried to leave as much of the interpretation as possible up to the participants themselves.

Like that of Eubanks and Abbott (2003), I believe that leaving the interpretation up to the researcher ignores possible meanings that the people themselves had when making their statements. What if numerous participants during the interview laugh? What does the laughter mean? Are they responding to a word, a sentence, an image, or just the way that something was said? Laughter alone can mean so many things or could actually mean nothing at all (Eubanks & Abbott, 2003). The same goes for a wink, was it a nervous twitch or a nonverbal response to a question or topic? How will the researcher interpret it, or how will the researcher interpret this? In this case I have paid attention to this and, where relevant, I have asked participants what was meant by the various ways they have responded to something. After all, Smith (1999) explains that meaning comes from the moment of utterance. Since I was there when such things have been uttered, it was likely important to explore the entire meaning of what was said while it was being said. A further aspect of interpretation for this research can be seen with the mapping of social relations, a tool which was found to be useful.

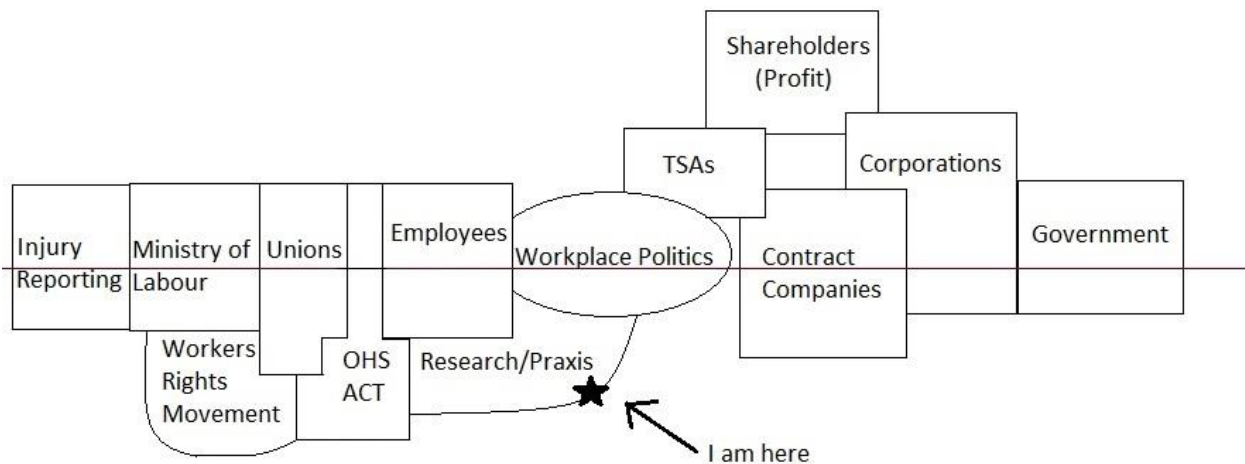
### Mapping Social Relations

Sears and Cairns (2010) explain the mapping of social relations slightly in relation to a map. What they suggest is that the map should show you where you are, sort of like the "you are here" that is displayed on the map for a shopping mall. The difference is where the mapping of social relations would be used to uncover the large social web that we negotiate every day. Researchers should do this for two reasons according to Sears and Cairns. Firstly, because we do not think about the things that we are familiar with, and secondly, because many key aspects that hold society together are hidden. I am familiar with what I have inquired about, although it is this

assumption that could have caused me to miss things and various relations in my research. This study has been mapped out through the guidance of Gary Kinsman.

Kinsman (2006) has taken the suggestion of mapping by Sears and Cairns (2010) a step further by applying it to situations of social struggle. As suggested by Kinsman (2006), to change the world we must uncover and critique social organizations. Researchers should map out the social relations that participate in the oppression of various groups. In the mapping of such relations we should not distance ourselves in the creation of the map, instead we act reflexively with it, and show where we are located and how we can move forward. Furthermore, we should not simply map out those that oppress us, rather, we should be inclusive of the opposition, resistance, and possible transformation (Kinsman, 2006). This is an approach that has ontological roots in autonomous Marxism and institutional ethnography. While this research does not necessarily focus on a social movement such as what Kinsman focuses on, my research is still part of a broader social movement that fights for better working conditions and a safer workplace. Below is the map that I have created for the sake of my own research.

**Figure 1: Mapping of Social Relations in TSA Work**



In this map I find myself under research and praxis, since I am the researcher and have an aim to improve the situation I am inquiring about. Workplace politics is at the center and encompasses input and output from everything included in this map. The line across the figure is what Kinsman refers to as the line of fault, where the lower side represents a focus on workers while the top represents a focus on business. TSAs have been placed above the line of fault since it is my own belief that TSAs do not focus on health, safety, and training, as this aspect is left up to the clients to which their employees are contracted to. This reliance on clients is why contract companies and corporations are on both sides of the line, since both wish to invest as little capital as possible into health, safety, and training, although they must do so to keep insurance costs down, avoid fines, and remain within minimal legislative requirements. The shareholders are detached from the businesses they invest in, and in doing so they likely only have a primary concern for increasing their monetary returns. The government is in between since this entity concerns itself with increasing business and the economy of the country while also trying to balance its reputation and pressures for better workplace standards. Employees have been placed in the middle because most of them often times are not aware of the problems with working conditions and training. When they do, I feel they would likely fit better in the workers' rights movement. Unions are also in the middle, since the union that represented me at a TSA was more concerned with collecting union dues and siding with the company and not with workers. This is not to say that all unions operate in this manner, which is why I have placed unions on both sides of the line of fault. The Ministry of Labour (MOL) is known for protecting workers, although there is often confusion when trying to submit complaints or questions to the effectiveness of their enforcement of rules. Out of this we can find the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA), the main body of rules that workplaces must follow in order to protect the

workers. I have placed the OSHA on both sides since, despite its intent to protect workers, it does not apply to everyone and in often cases is unclear and excludes workers with special circumstances such as TSA workers. This diagram has helped me to map out and define where various parties fit within the situation that is being inquired about. This has helped with focusing the questions that I have asked and the critiques I have offered throughout my study. After mapping out all the relations involved in this particular labour force, I find myself making links to Marx.

### Considerations of Karl Marx

People who commit research in the same field as Marx have to encounter him; he is inescapable (Simon, 1994). Those who investigate that which Marx has started will find Marx, and in doing so will have to expand, explain or refute Marx's work (Simon, 1994). Either way, it seems that the work of Marx has to be dealt with. This research is dealing with the topic of labour, work, oppression, and alienation and in doing so I find myself face to face with Marx. The work of Marx began as a way to explain and criticise power relations in modern society and he approached this in terms of looking at politics and the market (Simon, 1994). Marx was concerned with theory that could help explain the social reality of human beings, although as already mentioned, Marx was also concerned with changing the world. In the fight for freedom, Marx believed it was essential to understand the forces that oppress us. I also believe I needed to uncover and understand the relations involved in health and safety in the workplace since it is essential in the fight for better working conditions. I think of this like a car, you would not be able to fix it if you had no idea how it was built and how it operates. This is not reification here, rather, just a comparison for better understanding. It is also important to note that:

*"Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given, and transmitted from the past" (Marx, 1869: 188).*

What I believe Marx is saying here is that, despite being able to make our own lives for ourselves, we can only do so within the limits that have been set out for us prior to such moments. Despite placing an emphasis on the economic aspects of daily life, Marx in this case has also recognized that people have other external and historical constraints that act on their behaviour such as political and cultural aspects (Brym, 2002). For the sake of this research, a short historical analysis of TSAs has been explored in the literature review to give context to the current situation of struggle for TSA workers.

Another important aspect is social relations. The social relations for Marx are the relations to production and are further related to power (Simon, 1994). Simon asks: who is it that has the access to, and control over, the means of production? This question becomes central since those who have control over production further have control over labour itself (Simon, 1994) and in this case I am to also assume control over health and safety. According to Marx, capitalism has created working relations between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. The proletariat sell their labour to the bourgeoisie in exchange for a wage, and in doing so the worker (proletariat) gives control of their labour to the owner (bourgeoisie). In this relationship, specifications and characteristics of the work are completely controlled and decided upon by the employer (Simon, 1994). Brym (2002) explains, that for Marx, efficiency for capitalism not only means lower wages, but also means as little investment as possible needed to be put into the improvement of working conditions. According to Brym, this has caused workers to come face



to face with their employers in factories and mines. This also seems to be a large problem that stems from alienation.

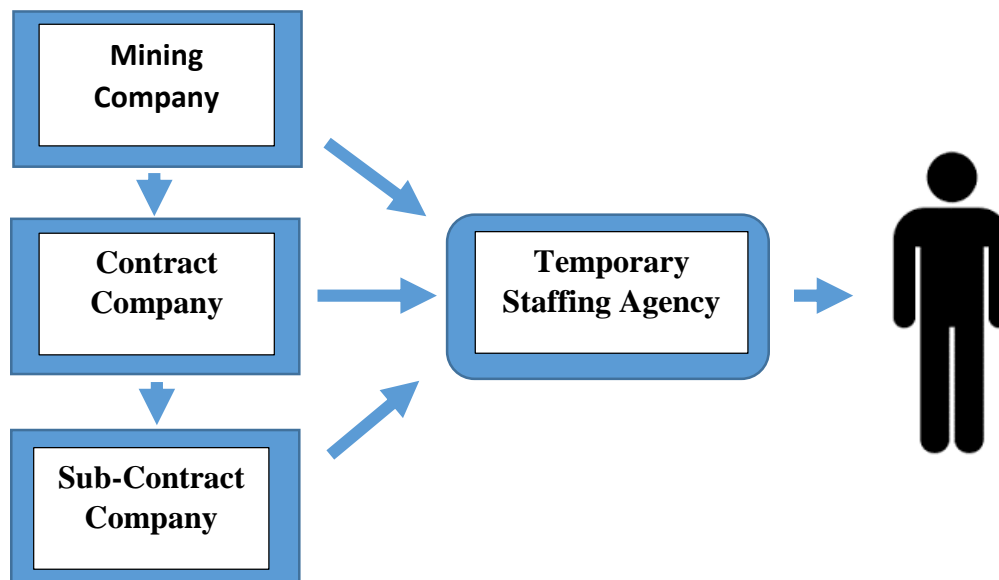
Marx (1932) sees workers as being alienated from the process of their labour and also from their fellow workers. Workers have no say, unless given by their employers, in their daily job processes (Marx, 1932) and health, safety, and training are aspects of this. Workers see other workers as competition for their jobs and wages, in which case, this creates a lack of community and solidarity in the workplace. This may also have implications for workers' health, safety and training since workers are kept apart from working together to fight for more control over their workplace. This is especially true with TSAs since employees work at multiple jobs, with different people all the time and many of whom work for different companies than their co-workers. This situation makes it difficult for workers to get to know each other since they rarely work with their fellow employees more than once, and those they work with are likely to work for a different employer. Workers in TSAs have to compete for work, and this competition is intensified since the work is always on a short term and contract basis, for varying pay rates, and also because of my experience and assumption that favorites are offered more work than others. Alienation can also be a result of highly bureaucratized workplaces as will be discussed below.

### **Bureaucracy and Hierarchy in Temporary Staffing Agencies**

Brym (2002) suggests that highly bureaucratized workplaces create a highly fragmented division of labour that alienates workers. Theories surrounding bureaucracy are linked heavily to Max Weber's work. For Weber, bureaucracy involves workplaces that have specialized divisions of labour, are impersonal, and have a hierarchy of authority. Authority works from a top down method, where the higher powers of management transmit to, and govern, the supervisors who

occupy the lower power. Then we find the workers at the very bottom with no authority in the workplace (Bailey & Gayle, 2003). This form of workplace regulation and power has caused what Weber has declared an iron cage of bureaucracy (Ritzer, 2002). The problem with Weber's work is that he offers us no room for escape or takes away our ability to create meaningful change in our places of work (Ritzer, 2002). Still, his explanation of hierarchies in the workplace and the difficulties with the workers having a say is valuable for my research as I can quickly recognize similar issues in the TSA industry. Following Weber right down to the "iron cage" that he discusses would present problems for the praxis of my research. It is at this point that I will be departing from Weber's work and focusing on ways of making meaningful change in a bureaucratic industry. Below is a flowchart to show the various working relationships that exist with TSA workers that show issues with bureaucracy and alienation.

**Figure 2: Business Relations of Temporary Staffing Agencies**



The arrows above represent the flow of contracted work from the main client to the various organizations. The client mining company often contract out short term work projects to a certain external company, and the TSA is there to fill in extra manpower needs. The client may require additional workers for a company related task and in which case they may request additional workers temporarily from a TSA. Sometimes clients require much more skilled jobs, such as fabrication and installation of new factory equipment, and will hire a contractor. The contractor in this case may feel that they require extra assistance for less skilled physical tasks such as cleaning or lifting, and will call upon a TSA to fill such needs. Furthermore, contractors may require additional expertise from sub-contractors such as consultants or engineers. Sub-contractors sometimes require additional manpower for various tasks and they too often contact a TSA for this need. TSA workers are then contacted by their staffing agency recruiter who offers them various jobs, for varying pay, and for varying periods of time, that such an employee can either accept or turn down. The TSA employees can work under any of the above working relationships for the same client job. An example here is likely useful. Imagine that three TSA employees from the same TSA company could be working on the exact same project and doing the exact same work on a mining client's property and yet one works for the client, one for the contractor, and one for the sub-contractor. All three workers in this case, despite doing the same job and tasks, and on the same project, may all be paid different amounts, receive different training, and be given a different quantity and quality of safety gear and clothing. From this description alone one should be able to imagine a few possible issues or questions surrounding health and safety, and responsibility.

## Ulrich Beck and Anthony Giddens

For theoretical aspects that are linked to my research that are more specific to the current changing workforce I turn to Ulrich Beck and his work on risk society and the global demand for flexibility in the labour market, and briefly to Anthony Giddens on globalization and risk. According to Beck (2000), neoliberal free trade has led to the Brazilianization in the west. In Brazil, full-time work is extremely rare and represents only a minority of the population and precarious work makes up the majority of employment where these kinds of workers have various jobs and training. According to Beck, work in the north is becoming as diverse, insecure, and unclear as the south, such as that in Brazil. This has caused high unemployment, and has increased temporary forms of work with the decline of full employment. Highly skilled and full-time employment is leaving, and the life-time job is disappearing as well (Beck, 2000). Giddens (2000) notes that globalization is largely causing various forms of inequality, especially in work where industries are continuously seeking out the cheapest forms of employment. The North American labour market under this type of politics is demanding for a more flexible workforce, one that is more precarious and where employees can be fired much more easily (Beck, 2000). Such jobs are now short term and where employees can easily be dismissed from a job. Due to this new need for a more flexible and precarious workforce, new forms of working arrangements, such as TSAs, has evolved and expanded (Beck, 2000). A further problem with this is that globalization and its decentralization of power is causing labour to lose its collective identity. Giddens (2000) seems to agree as he suggests that globalization is causing us to lose control over our world and its various processes. This is a problem that I have assumed earlier in terms of the fragmentation and division of the TSA workers and their inability to act collectively. Furthermore, as globalization expands, unions, bargaining power and gains are running into

obstacles (Beck, 2000). Unions in this case are finding it difficult to organize the increasingly fragmented labour force which also has implications for contract negotiations and workplace improvements. This new need for flexibility creates opportunities for regulations such as labour contracts and safety standards to be renegotiated. This is one of the reasons why questions of unionization with TSA workers was included in this research, to find their experiences with unions in the face of this flexible workplace.

Slightly in relation to Weber and bureaucracy, Beck (1999) believes that safety is highly developed and bureaucratic. In this new labour market, acceptable risks are seen as, and become, accepted risks. Acceptable risks are determined by private organizations that decide how much hazards people can be subjected to. In this case, too much emphasis is given to scientific methods of testing for probable safety risks (Beck, 1999). From a sociological point of view, this is difficult since it is difficult to stuff the social world into a test tube. According to Beck, questions of safety must be clearly and definitely answered before such questions can even be raised. This also becomes a problem since unhealthy or risky situations would have to be created in order to test their probability (Beck, 1999). In my opinion, this is likely why the OSHA is said to be written in blood, since someone has to actually die before future protection is put into writing. All safety that falls beyond probability becomes "residual risk" which is hypothetical risk and not considered an issue that needs to be addressed (Beck, 1999). In this case, safety and probable safety are considered and treated the same despite being separate. Giddens discusses this as well in terms of globalization, leading us to a world of work that dependent on calculated risk. According to Giddens (2000), risk is seen as potential hazards being assessed in relation to future opportunities and gains as it has become something that is calculated. Insurance companies alleviate the fear of risk for companies since the insurance shifts the financial burden

of responsibility onto the insurance companies. The important thing to remember according to Giddens is that insurance does not remove risk or hazards from taking place. I believe that health, safety, and training should not be considered only in terms of their probability; if a safety issue is expressed by workers then I feel that such issues should be addressed and not just considered. Beck and Giddens' work that has been mentioned here has proven useful for the understanding of the flexible workplace in relation to issues of unionization and health, safety, and training.

### Summary of Theoretical Considerations

The theoretical aspects of my research has been largely influenced in some way by the above theorists and have acted as strong focal points that have helped guide and explain aspects of this study. It is important to summarize here that my epistemology has two parts that relate to the two steps of my research: interpretivist as Bryman, et al. (2009) have discussed and reflexive which comes from the writing of Smith (1999). I begin from my own struggles with the world as Holloway (2003) has suggested while trying to map out my struggles as best as I can according to Kinsman (2006). This section has also discussed TSAs in relations to the changing world of work according to Beck (1999, 2000) and Giddens (2000), and in relation to Weber's notion of bureaucracies (Bryman, 2002). The large majority of this research on the other hand finds its way into the work of Marx (1845, 1869, 1932) in his discussions of praxis, alienation and social relations of work. Finally, particular attention has been paid to discourse and its interpretation within this study. All aspects above are extremely valuable in their contributions to this study and have proven indispensable.

## Chapter 4

### Methodology

#### Population of Interest

The population inquired from were temporary staffing workers specific to Sudbury, Ontario's surface mining operations. These employees were able to be of any age and gender, although they must have been currently working for one of the temporary staffing agencies here in Sudbury or have worked for one over the past five years. The staffing agencies in the Sudbury area include: Total Personnel Solutions (TPS), Levert Personnel Resources, Andre Marcotte Incorporated (AMI), Northern Employment Solutions (NES) and Workforce. Consideration and exclusion of certain individuals will be discussed in the problematic considerations section further below.

#### Sampling Methods

This study utilized convenience and snowball sampling. Known individuals who worked for, or previously worked for, temporary staffing agencies in surface mining, and specifically in Sudbury, Ontario's surface mining sector, were contacted. These individuals were informed of the study and participant expectations, and offered the opportunity to participate. Potential participants were additionally asked if they could contact any known TSA workers and inform them of my study and request their participation. After describing the study, potential participants were able to contact me by phone or email if they wished to gain more information on my study, while also notifying me if they were willing to participate.

## Data Collection Tool

This study mainly focused on uncovering opinions and perceptions, in other words this research is primarily descriptive. Descriptions and perceptions of various aspects of TSA work in relations to health, safety and training by TSA workers in Sudbury, Ontario's surface mining industry were accomplished through the use of interviews. Interviews were semi-structured, as participants openly discussed and elaborated on various main questions and themes regarding their experiences and views. Interview questions were inspired from past research, and through my own experiences in the industry. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. This qualitative method has provided an in depth look at participant responses that gave a great focus and importance on the participant. Interviews also allowed the analysis and interpretation to be dictated mainly from participant responses rather than from any external interpretation or observation. All interviews were conducted in locations that were preferred and convenient for the participants, although locations had to be in public places for the comfort and safety of both the interviewer and participants. Locations included: Laurentian University and the public libraries throughout the city of Sudbury. Participants were also given consent forms that notified them of their rights, what is expected of them, and how their participation and responses were kept confidential (Please see *Appendix B* for a copy of the consent form). The form additionally made them aware of the goals of the research and the expected completion date.



## Variables

**Table 1: Variables of Interest for my Research**

<b>Dependent</b>	<b>Independent</b>
Perceptions of health and safety	Variability of work
Perceptions of unions	Employer
Ability to voice concerns	Workplace relations
Injury reporting	Unionization
Perceptions of training	

It is the assumption that all the independent variables from the list may or may not influence the responses involving the dependent variables (Please see *Appendix D* for a definition of variables). While relationships between such variables exist, this research is mainly descriptive, in which case, responses and possible relationships have been described rather than focusing on quantitative causality.

## Analysis

Interviews have mainly been used to not only describe the phenomena inquired about, but it has also been an opportunity for workers to describe their experiences and issues, in other words it gave them a voice. Transcripts generated from the interviews have been thoroughly reviewed in order to find common responses and themes. Themes revolved around majority shared responses to the questions posed. Themes were the focus of the results and discussion sections rather than discussing responses to every individual interview question. Quotes from respondents that stood out as best describing majority responses were used to help illustrate and explain all findings. Themes and the frequency of responses have been presented in a table format that will be found in the results section of this study. All client companies, TSAs,

contractors and unions discussed by respondents have been coded for anonymity. The table below displays the coding used to represent the various organizations.

**Table 2: Organization Identification Codes**

Organization	Identification Code				
<b>Client Company</b>	Client 1a		Client 1b		
<b>TSA</b>	TSA 2a	TSA 2b	TSA 2c	TSA 2d	TSA 2e
<b>Contractor</b>	Contract 3a		Contract 3b		
<b>Union</b>	Union 4a		Union 4b		

## Ethical and Problematic Considerations

Ethical review of this study had been completed prior to data collection. The American Sociological Association code of ethics (1999) has also been consulted, and the Government of Canada's second edition of the Tri-Council Policy Statement course on the ethical conduct of research involving humans has also been completed (Please see *Appendix E* for a copy this certificate).

In the sampling methods, people who were both injured and not working during the data collection period were excluded. Such individuals had been excluded since they may have been going through trauma or recovery and their participation could have impeded on their process of recovery. Employees who have been injured in the past, and who have since returned to normal work, have been included in this study. There were no foreseen serious problems with this since injured employees have to undergo a professional evaluation before returning to work.

Furthermore, any questions proposed in the interview would have had no different of an effect than the effects that such a person would find being back in their workplace. In the event there

would have been some form of emotional trauma or feelings of injustice felt by the respondent, there was a list on hand during the interviews that identified various resources they could contact.

Fear of reprisals limited the participation rate of this study. In order to safeguard the participants, every precaution was taken to protect the identity and confidentiality of the respondents. Respondents were assured in the initial letter of participation of their confidentiality and that their participation was strictly voluntary (Please see *Appendix B* for a copy of the consent form). They were further informed that they could opt out of participating at any time. All responses have been aggregately reported, and any possible identifying information, such as age, was not reported in relation to a specific respondent. Participants were requested that they refrain from providing any personal names. If a respondent mentioned the name of a fellow employee, then that name was immediately deleted from the recording.

Interview recordings were stored in a safe location with limited access. Once the interviews were transcribed, the original tapes were deleted. TSAs have no way of finding out which employees participated unless the employees take it upon themselves to inform their employer. Additionally, I have given all respondents a copy of a list of useful resources should they require any assistance with issues or emotions faced during the interview (Please see *Appendix C* for a copy of this resource list).

## Chapter 5

### Results

Eight participants were interviewed for the purpose of this study. This study stopped at eight participants for two reasons. The first reason was due to saturation as it seemed as though there was no new information being generated from any of the final interviews. The second reason was the difficulty faced when trying to gain participants. It should be noted that it took seven months to gain eight participants. The respondents had a combined average experience of five and a half years, which ranged from two to ten years, as temporary staffing workers. Seven of the respondents were male and one was female, which should be an acceptable ratio since males greatly outnumber female workers in this specific industry. The average length of all the interviews combined was 24 minutes, which ranged from 12 to 33 minutes. Only two of the participants currently work for a temporary staffing agency, while the remaining six have worked for one within the past three years even though the sampling frame had allowed a five year window. Respondents reported working for one or multiple TSAs. As mentioned previously, TSA names will not be referenced specifically in this section or in the discussion.

All interviews were reviewed for the discovery of common patterns or codes. These codes were reviewed again to develop common themes. The following table shows the major relevant themes discovered with the frequency of responses among the respondents:

**Table 3: Relevant Themes and Frequencies**

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Precariousness of Temporary Work	•Precarious work	N=7
Various Issues with Training	•Paid own training	N=5
	•TSA paid training	N=2
	•Unsure	N=1
	•TSAs should pay for training •TSA should not pay for training •Unsure	N=4 N=1 N=3
Quality of Training	•Not given work after training	N=5
	•Received inadequate training	N=8
Training better at Client Companies	•Better at client company	N=6
	•Better at TSA	N=1
	•Both are the same	N=1
Responses to Responsibility	•TSA is responsible for health and safety	N=3
	•Client company is responsible for health and safety	N=1
	•Everyone is responsible for health and safety	N=1
	•The worker is responsible for health and safety	N=2
Problems with Co-Workers	•The client company and the TSA are responsible for health and safety	N=1
	•Client company and TSA emergency contact	N=1
	•TSA emergency contact	N=4
	•No idea who contact is	N=1
Individual Job Safety	•Client company supervisor is emergency contact	N=2
	•Problems with co-worker training	N=8
Voice in the Workplace	•Co-workers are a hazard to health and safety	N=8
	•Safe due to their own diligence	N=6
Unionization	•Safety depends on various factors	N=2
	•Unable to participate in health and safety	N=5
	•Can participate in health and safety	N=2
Improvements for TSAs	•Can participate although with problems	N=1
	Frequency of responses cannot be disclosed here for confidentiality reasons. Please refer to the results section on this below for more information.	
Reprisals	Solutions offered to improve TSAs	N=8
	Discussed reprisals for speaking out about health and safety concerns	N=2

While not a theme, I have included a section titled *Final Thoughts*. I have included this since some of the respondents asked me to include their responses to my final interview question. During the interview, respondents were given the opportunity to provide any final thoughts that they would like to share in relation to TSA work. I have also selected and display certain quotes that I felt best represented the theme being discussed. I have chosen quotes for their clarity, emphasis and coverage of the theme being discussed.

### Precariousness of Temporary Work

The first discovered theme involves the reported precariousness of work. Respondents were simply asked how often they work, or have worked, while being employed as a temporary staffing worker. All respondents, with the exception of one who only worked *shutdowns*, revealed that their employment was precarious in some way. Respondents revealed that work did not follow a yearly standard schedule. Respondents reported work as varying throughout the year where they would only receive steady work from time to time. Some respondents reported not having any work for months on end and had no consistency in their schedules.

*It varied... it was hit and miss. So it might be 15 days a month. (Respondent 1)*

*Sometimes it died out for a good two to three months. Picked up some labour shifts here and there. So that's probably... on the low end really. I would say, when it's on the low end, it would probably be two weeks out of the month, one week out of the month maybe. False promises... they tell you they have full time work year round. The main reason*

*people go to this is because they don't have any connections. Like most people have to get into these big companies. It's who you know and not what you know. So people like myself who come out of school looking for a career and we are trying to do that the right way. So we go to these staffing agencies and say we're hoping we can get a careers going through this and everybody's doing it. Some people are lucky with the people they get staffed with. Let's say I got staffed with (Contract 3a) or something like that they could hire me through (TSA 2c) but the kicker is that (TSA 2c) charges a premium to remove me from the contract so that (contract 3a) can do it so therefor it discourages the company to hire me. I think it's a big sham just to keep us in the shackles. (Respondent 2)*

*There was a lot of inconsistency. I would say, guaranteed, I would work maybe a week and a half out of the month guaranteed and the rest was here and there. (Respondent 7)*

The responses by most respondents were short although they do show that the respondents have had varying amounts of work and inconsistent work schedules. Work was never guaranteed and some employees would go months on end without receiving any work. There is a suggestion from *respondent 2* that employees are promised full-time work although such steadiness never transpired. Additionally, the TSAs apparently keep employees from gaining full-time work with other companies due to a fee they charge to companies who wish to permanently hire TSA workers.

## Various Issues with Training

Participants were asked a few questions regarding training that included whether or not they had to pay for their own training, whether or not they get paid hourly for training, financial problems associated with training, if they should have to pay for their own training, and if they are given work following training. Five respondents had to pay for some of their training, while two respondents had their training covered, and one respondent was unsure. While NORCAT (Northern Ontario Center for Advanced Technology) costs were covered for two respondents, five had to pay for their own NORCAT, while one had to additionally pay for their Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) and their respiratory fit test. Four of the respondents did not get paid hourly for their training while one respondent did, and the remaining three were unsure.

*No I didn't get paid at all, but the training was free. (Respondent 5)*

*I'm pretty sure I did not get paid for my training, they just supplied the funding for the training and that was sufficient for them. (Respondent 6)*

*Nope, I didn't pay for it. I fought for my pay and my training to be paid. It came with the contract. It had to go with the contract that the employer had to hire employees like myself and they had to train them. When I went in there I didn't have qualifications other than college, Millwright, and that's for the industrial field. Other than that I didn't have nothing, so they told me they cover everything and so I guess I came in at a good time. (Respondent 2)*



*I've noted in the past that they will pay for certain peoples training and won't pay for others, so they are selective in what they do instead of being broad. (Respondent 1)*

There was definitely a variation in paid training where some would get paid hourly for training while others were not, training was paid for some while others had to cover the costs for some training, and some who got paid hourly for training at the beginning of their work did not get paid hourly for their training later. It is also important to note *respondent 1* who mentions that the TSA they worked for was selective in which employee got their training covered, while *respondent 2* got their training covered but had to fight for it.

Three of the five respondents reported issues with having to pay for their own training, while two of the respondents failed to give any comment. Additionally, five respondents were never given work after being told to go and get training or received training that was never used for any of their work.

*There were certain situations where it required training just in case I was needed to perform certain duties and in certain cases the training was done and the performances regarding it were never really fulfilled for whatever reason. (Respondent 7)*

*I did water rescue though there was not a job and I was not told there would be a job but I took it anyways. I was asked to take something where there was no job at the end of the training, but if it did ever come up the possibility could be me working. (Respondent 5)*

*(TSA 2a) did that a lot. Promised you a lot, promised you the world and I went to get training for the (client 1a) refinery I think. I did the indoctrination there and I was supposed to work. Never worked there, never ever worked there. That was a lot of training. Couldn't do anything. Was just a waste of time if anything. (Respondent 2)*

*There has been sites and numerous people getting trained at a site and you never end up going there. So you spend your own time, your own gas, and you don't get paid, so that's out of your own pocket. They say it's a requirement for the job but really they should be paying you something. The rope rescue training was one. It was a big expense on their part and was their problem but we never used it. It was four or five days out of my time that I never got paid. That's just an example. (Respondent 1)*

There were reported issues respondents had with paying for their own training, some of which had been mentioned above such as taking a lot of time for the training while not getting paid hourly and also wasting the valuable time of the respondents. There seemed to be frustration expressed mainly with spending their time on training that they never ended up using. They were additionally asked if paying for training created any problems for the respondents. Some of the reported issues are illustrated as follows.

*At the time it did because when I was going for that type of work I was already in some financial need. So the extra cost of getting the additional training to do something like labour work did create more stress. It was less money for necessities like food or lodging. (Respondent 8)*

*Well just recently my former employer called me up and asked me to come back to work and I said well I have no money, I'm a student, to pay for training and he said well tough luck right. They expect you to pay for training and go work for them. (Respondent 1)*

*I may not have the money to pay for it. (Respondent 5)*

Respondents were asked if they should pay for their own training and additionally asked why they believed their staffing agency did not pay for their training. Four of the respondents believed that temporary staffing agencies should be required to pay for the training of their employees, while one believed employees should pay for their training and three were unsure.

*I don't have a problem with it. It would be nice if you could maybe write it off somehow or if it was reimbursed after you worked for them for so long. But I mean at the end of the day it is something you can use for a couple of years regardless of who you work for so paying for it wasn't an issue. (Respondent 4)*

*Well, I don't know. I don't agree with their whole NORCAT system. I haven't learned anything new from NORCAT ever. Your general orientation or INDOC [indoctrination] pretty much covers what you need to know for safety and on site so NORCAT is really to me just a cash job to make money. They invented it. Somebody is getting paid big bucks and making lots of money off of it [NORCAT]. It's not saving lives I can tell you that. (Respondent 5)*

*You know what. I don't think, considering the types of jobs they put you into, that you should have to pay a full cost. I think that if they are promising you work which they also promise and it's not always guaranteed when you are paying out of your pocket. You're paying for something that's not guaranteed in the first place either so they are really just transferring that risk to you as the worker. It doesn't feel good, but when you need a job and you need the money, you're willing to fit the bill. (Respondent 8)*

*I believe there is somewhere in government law that states that if you go on a site, or someone hires you, they need to pay for the training. I don't know what law it is but it's in the green book somewhere. (Respondent 1)*

*No. Because when the [TSA] goes and gets the contract, it's in their contract that, when they say let's go to (client 1b) or (client 1a) they say you have to hire qualified people and they actually bill (client 1b) and (client 1a) for qualifying their own people. So basically it will cost them so much money to train one person, that's within their costs when they go and hire those people for those jobs for (client 1a). Cause necessarily they can't find anybody with those qualifications. So they consider that and they add that money towards the payment to (TSA 2c). So basically when (TSA 2c) goes to (client 1b), (client 1b) says we need these types of people, (TSA 2c) says it's going to cost this much. Within their costs they already know how much it's going to cost to train one person so they charge the company as well on top of what they want as a fee. (Respondent 2)*

As explained by the respondents, some of the reasons they felt for having their employer pay for their training involve the necessity for training in order for the company to contract you out and make money, that TSAs have also factored training into their contracts with client companies, that training such as NORCAT is suggested as being a money making scheme that is not seen as useful, and finally, since it is believed to be legally mandatory according to the OHSA. Two respondents also discussed why they felt that the temporary staffing agencies did not pay for any of the training.

*Well it would be a lot of money if they had to pay for every single temporary employee who worked for them, it's a lot of money. \$80 for surface, \$80 for underground, then we do our WHMIS with them. Let's say we have to do ZES [Zero Energy State] that's another \$50 for an hour and \$30 for 30 golden rules ever since the guys died, the two guys. (Respondent 5)*

*The company would have issues where they would get the company to pay for it and then they would go work for somebody else who wouldn't pay for it. (Respondent 4)*

The high training costs involved with training every employee is seen as expensive for the company and may be a reason why they do not wish to pay for all training. Additionally, there is apparently problems with employees getting training that the employer pays for and then leaves to work for another company.

There are mixed responses to the issues of training. Many of the respondents had to pay for their own training, and were not paid hourly for their training. Many felt that the company

should pay for all the training and discussed some of the problems that the employees face due to paying for their own training which were mainly financial struggles and wasting the time of their workers with unnecessary training. The next section will discuss the quality of the training they receive and suggestions for improvements with training.

## Quality of Training

All respondents have noted that they have received inadequate training, although not necessarily suggesting all training is inadequate. Something to consider with these results is that training for TSA workers can come from multiple sources. According to the respondents, training can come from the TSA, from training centres such as NORCAT, or from client companies who are responsible for giving site specific indoctrinations. The following statements help illustrate some of the potential issues with training adequacy and their long testimonies have been included since this is an important focus of this study.

*So essentially prior to working, we had to have specific training that was required as per that particular mine site so we required confined space training which was no more than sitting in front of a computer screen and running through modules. At no time was there any hands on training. As I recall that was basically status quo throughout the training process with the exception, I believe, with fall arrest training which requires you to wear a harness that was simply showing you how to properly put the harness on. With the exception that there was no hands on training of any kind for anything. It just seems like the general atmosphere is you require these tickets, go sit in front of that computer and*

*get them done. We will print out your ticket and off you go. That's my general impression of the way it was run. (Respondent 3)*

*It's the same video that I've seen, how many times I have done NORCAT, every two years, so we will say I have probably done it at least 4 times. It's the same video, old guy talking about safety with his glasses and the old ways mentality. Still, I mean a lot of things don't change but a lot of things have changed, but the videos don't reflect that and I am paying 80 bucks for this course so at least they can throw in a modern video in there just to modernize it a bit. Maybe a younger person like myself on there talking about safety and experiences they had with safety. (Respondent 5)*

*Well I think all the computer based stuff was pretty much a joke because you sit there and you pretty much skip through, fast forward, whatever you need to do to get through the thing. You answer the four questions at the end and you get your certificate. Like I don't think that there was much accountability on the hiring company, the personnel company, to even ensure that the training was satisfactorily completed. You know, I shoot myself in the foot for saying that but that's really the way it was. You skimmed through, you got your certificate, and you went to the site and really, what you learned on the computer is not what you do when you are on the site so you know it kind of seemed like they were just doing it because that was the law. (Respondent 8)*

*You're essentially going in there, into a confined space to retrieve someone that's fallen or has had a medical issue or trauma and the first aid training they provided wasn't at*

*the level it needed to be and some of the rescue training, self-contained breathing apparatus, some of the hauling systems and mechanical systems weren't up to snuff. It's gotten better now, a little bit, but it's still not where it should be, I feel anyways with my background and my experience. (Respondent 1)*

*There has been a couple of WHMIS's I've done through the years and it just kinda seemed rushed. People had questions and it was like oh yeah we will get back to that and you know they never do. You kind of do it in a half hour and you're like that's it? Okay, well here's hoping the rest of these people have done this before. (Respondent 4)*

These are the main statements that illustrate some of the issues with training that TSA employees may receive. The focus here is not to demonize the industry for training issues, rather it is to uncover possible issues and then find suggestions from the workers regarding possible routes for improvement. The following statements are the key suggestions for improving training at TSAs.

*I think it's just finding a way to maybe bring the materials across. WHMIS and NORCAT are pretty dry and NORCAT you are doing it on a computer so it's easy, it's quick but I question how much people retain. There's stuff I've forgotten and I've been doing it how long now. Off and on ten years now I guess and there is stuff I don't remember from it cause it's just, kinda go through and you're like click, click, click. (Respondent 4)*



*Paramedics they go through school for a couple of years, just to know how the body functions and stuff like that. I think SCBA [Self Contained Breathing Apparatus], we're also supposed to learn how to breathe and make sure we're not going to screw up anything. I think at least three days, three to four days, and literally just going through it like its second nature to you. Like its second nature for paramedics, after those years they know what to do. Don't panic under a crisis. One day of training and someone could easily panic and screw up the whole thing, someone could die because of it. It is inadequate and I say two, three to four days of vigorous training that puts more confidence in the person. And after that say they only trained that one time and for two years they worked and nothing happened and then something did happen, you think that one day training they are going to remember? Nope, not at all. When they get vigorously trained though, that's when things kick in. Even though before every shift they have to know, they have to do their due process before letting people in the hole [confined space] per se. They do a mock test, but most of the time they don't do that. They're lazy. They don't think it's going to happen to them but it does. (Respondent 2)*

*Well an accredited body. There was talk about bringing in NFPA [National Fire Protection Association] certified training or some type of governing body to monitor it because mine rescue and what not we don't really fall under that jurisdiction so I feel the ministry has to come in and really bare down and get these companies under a certain governing body that will govern them so that the standards can go up and its safe for everybody. It's not just safe for the companies or other employers. (Respondent 1)*

There is a voiced concern with the confidence due to the quality of the training. An accredited body that governs the standards of the training is suggested to assist here. A governing body would likely improve the standards of training since many notable workers, such as the mention of paramedics, are organized under a governing body for their training and knowledge specific to their job.

*I think hands on training would have gone a long way. I mean at no time even if you have questions and concerns during the training as they have it outlined now there is no one you can address those with, you're sitting in front of a computer screen. (Respondent 3)*

*I think a little more interaction... I think people learn better through, or I could say I learn better through a mix of interpersonal. Like learning as well as computer based learning so maybe doing some of the modules and then doing some practical applications of that module or the overall training at the end that might be a little more meaningful to show that they really do care that you're learning these safety related things and that you are actually going to be able to apply them because you think that the liability is on them even though you are the worker, they are the hiring company, so I think even for their own accountability they would do that. But yeah I think they could do more, definitely I think they could do more. (Respondent, 8)*

*The rescue training we could have done more hands on, more onsite training like not just in the basement. The training is okay like putting it on, how to put it on, how to take it off, how to put them in and actually do it. But we need to get more of a scenario, like an*

*actual action movie set like play, like it's real, like you're yelling out, you're yelling, their screaming, and we do a bit of that and then there is crowd control. There is a lot of things and realistically nobody is even trained, even (TSA 2b) on what is really going to happen. Everyone is going to run into that hole and the guys in there they're not going to listen to the attendant. Their partner is down on the ground you think they're going to leave? Rescue is going to be busy putting on their gear. The guys are still going to be in there. Let's deal with a real situation where it's what's really going to go down when there is five guys in there and their man, their best guy is down, their best friend.*

*(Respondent 5)*

These were the main suggestions for improvement. To summarize everything here it is clear that there are issues brought up by the respondents in terms of training and improvements. Issues and solutions include a lack of training due to associated costs, no accredited body certifying the training, no or too little interaction and too little hands on during the training, training is not frequent enough, too much computer based and dry material based training, worst case scenario training needed, training could be modernized, training feels rushed, and employees should be able to fail tests. Luckily some see improvements although it is still not where it needs to be according to the responses.

### **Training better at Client Companies**

Respondents were asked, in their opinion, whether or not the health, safety and training is better, the same, or worse than that of the client mining companies. Six of the respondents illustrated that the training may be better at the client companies, while one respondent said it

was likely better at their TSA, and one respondent said they were likely about the same. The comments to this question are as follows.

*I'm sure if I work for (Client 1b) it would be better because they're like a multibillion dollar company, so they are a little bit more liable for a lot of things. So I am sure their training and facilities would be better and more intense then the staffing agencies, they have the funds to throw out to do it. (Respondent 6)*

*Less [than client company] because they'll send you into an office setting all day to hammer out as much training as possible and just be legally competent or valid to be there. So I feel that perhaps some of the training gets forgotten or is erased from the approach because nobody is really overlooking it. It's a pass fail situation. You pass you're there, where if you are (client 1a) and you're private, you're more aware of the training that they're giving and the people that they were giving it to. (Respondent 7)*

*Like the full-time (client 1a) or (client 1b) employee, generally speaking they have a better knowledge of the mine site itself. They could have worked in and out of mining companies for years. At minimum they've worked there longer and an employee with (client 1a) or (client 1b) that has likely the least amount of seniority on that site property, I can almost guarantee you with any certainty, has more experience than anybody in this part-time staffing agency. (Respondent 3)*

*Definitely (client 1a) training, overall they have a better scope of training. (TSA 2c) had the opportunity to team up with (client 1b) so we did get a lot of (client 1b) oriented training, but know again they give their guys ten times what we get so I think that placement agency training is inadequate for some jobs depending on the scope. Some things are fine, if you were on a shovel and you have your WHMIS and your fit test and everything then sure its fine but they hire people to do certain jobs that they aren't qualified for or they are not ready to do. (Respondent 1)*

*(client 1a) or (client 1b) are way better. They actually give a \*\*\*\* about their own workers. They make sure you got the proper training. You got the proper PPE [Personal Protective Equipment]. If your PPE is damaged they get you a new one because these companies can afford it they're billion dollar companies. They can make sure you're getting your proper equipment. Cause say if health and safety comes through and you're not wearing your safety glasses or your safety glasses are scratched or your boots are torn apart or you look ratty and you don't look safe then you damn right they will be written up. So it saves (client 1b) or (client 1a) a lot of money if they just get proper PPE for their workers. For contractors they don't give a \*\*\*\*, they say they do it but they don't. (Respondent 2)*

*I definitely got the most training I ever had when I was with (TSA 2d). I had just a ridiculous amount of training but it all pertained to what I ended up doing. They wanted to make sure I remembered the job, make sure I remembered who I was looking out for*

*and what to do you know, in case stuff happened so. They kind of set me up and there is still stuff I remember. (Respondent 4)*

*I think we try to keep it in par with them and I mean we are obviously working for lower companies but also for the parent companies or other contract companies. But I think we are all on board in health and safety, we are all about going home alive and safe and without any stuff with us back home. (Respondent 5)*

As illustrated above, the majority of respondents are in agreement that the client mining companies are perceived to be better in terms of health, safety and training, while *respondent 4* suggests that (TSA 2d) is doing better, and *respondent 5* feels that all companies are equally engaged with health, safety and training.

## Responses to Responsibility

Respondents were asked who they felt were ultimately responsible for their health and safety. Additionally they were asked who they would contact in the event of a theoretical injury and who would be responsible in the theoretical event of an injury due to a lack of training. The point of this question was to discover if there was a common and correct consensus regarding who is responsible on the job and in the theoretical situation. Unfortunately responses were mixed. Three respondents suggested it was the TSA who is responsible for their health and safety, one respondent believed it is the client company, one felt it was everyone's responsibility, two felt it was solely their responsibility, and one felt it was the TSA and the client. The

discussion regarding these responses in relation to the OHSA will be covered later in the discussion section of this report. Some of the responses are illustrated below.

*Everybody. There is a different responsibility for different levels (Respondent 4)*

*That's a mutual relationship actually. For the last 10 years it's been pumped into my brain that in the end of the day it's me that's responsible but our employers are supposed to be responsible too. (Respondent 6)*

*Only you can truly be in control of your safety and due diligence. Its ok to rely on others but at the end of the day some people do take short cuts unfortunately and some people could be a hazard to you so you always have to start with yourself and then go by the system and then use somebody who represents the safety as kind of like a third party ambassador (Respondent 7)*

*We have a designated health and safety, \*\*\*\*\* [person's name left out for confidentiality] was our health and safety, he's no longer but now they're hiring for health and safety, otherwise now we have things called coordinators. They act sort of as health and safety, they also coordinate the job to make sure that all the equipment is there and that we are properly trained. (Respondent 5)*

*I think I am responsible ultimately for my own safety. If I don't feel comfortable doing something I need to recognize that I shouldn't be doing it but second to that there is a lot of pressure from the hiring company to just do the job at all costs and that's that, and*

*third I would say that it is the company that you are actually going in there to do coverage for and provide service to. I think that it's like a joint venture, but ultimately I am in charge of my own safety. (Respondent 8)*

*(client 1b) or (client 1a) hires (TSA 2c) to find these qualified individuals and if they can't and (TSA 2c) takes the contract they are in a binding agreement that they will provide those people with the proper qualifications to do the job. So, now it's on (TSA 2c) shoulders to provide those people. Now if people are going to work without any proper qualifications for a certain job that's liable for (TSA 2c) not for the company, like (client 1b) or (client 1a). It definitely lands on (TSA 2c) shoulders, (TSA 2e) shoulders or any other staffing place's shoulders. (Respondent 2)*

There is no clear consensus among the participants in regards to who is responsible for their health and safety on the job. In regards to who the respondents would contact in the case of an injury are as follows: One respondent said they would contact the client company and the TSA, four said they would contact the TSA, one had no idea who to contact, and two said they would contact the client company supervisor.

*You are usually given a supervisor when you're on site, either somebody that works for the company, works for the agency, and they're your go to during that time frame or it's somebody with the company. You get told that when you get in there. This is who your contact is, this is who you call for anything. That would be the first person to call and then from there it would go, depending on how bad the injury was, and usually it has to*



*go through a first aid or something anyway because they want to record all that.*

*(Respondent 4)*

*I would probably contact, I don't know. I would probably decide whether or not it was my fault or inadequate training and then if it was inadequate training then I would probably first go through (TSA 2c) and depending on their answer I would go to the board of labour after that. But that's worst case scenario. (Respondent 6)*

*I honestly wouldn't know what to do. Perhaps because none of my experiences never given me the knowledge of how to pursue it. I think that's probably an issue because that's probably something that we should be aware of in the event of... and that's one thing that's lacked over the years. I honestly don't even know what I would do.*

*(Respondent 7)*

*Probably (client 1a). (TSA 2c) will be coming though, they'll be notified as well. But now we are talking injuries so yeah supervisor, first aid if necessary would probably be the first call and if it is some sort of mechanical thing we gotta control. Get first aid, get first line supervisor, get my supervisor, whatever your contact person and then they would obviously contact theirs and then we would contact our supervisor if it is on site or if we have to call them in, there is a coordinator then he can act as the supervisor for (TSA 2c).*

*(Respondent 5)*

*It depends on the severity of the injury. I'm sure the first person that would be notified would be their first aid/security. After that you go through all the certain channels. I'm under the impression that, say it was on (client 1a) property they would do their investigation and then your contract company would also have to do the same.*

*(Respondent 3)*

There was less variation in responses towards the hypothetical scenario I posed (Please see **Appendix A** question E). The responses are as follows: two respondents believe it would have been the TSAs fault, one felt that it would be the workers fault, while the rest believed that it depended on the specifics of the event that occurred.

*I think it would depend on how they determined it was the training. If it was that I didn't pay attention to the training, if it was something that I didn't recognize I'd be in trouble. If it was something that was never given as training whoever was doing the training. If it was the company, if it was the agency, whoever. (Respondent 4)*

*I would have to say both because perhaps I didn't ask enough questions. They were negligent on not giving me the proper training. I think we're both at fault. If I have done everything I can to ensure my performance was the safest as can be but I was lacking information that was hazardous then I would say them. If I performed a task where I knew I probably should inquire about its hazards and what not and I went ahead and performed it anyway, and even though they didn't tell me about it, negligence is having both ways in that case. (Respondent 7)*

*If it leads to an investigation obviously then we are going to get the Ministry in there.*

*Then we are going to find out who's responsible, if it's the machine, if it's the operator.*

*(Respondent 5)*

*In practice it should be the company that provided the training, but in reality that hasn't been my experience. If there is a safety related incident that happens it's the worker that gets the blame and gets fired. But you know that has just been my experience, I haven't had too many injuries but from what I have experienced it's been on the worker.*

*(Respondent 8)*

The respondents all revealed varying responses to the important questions regarding who is ultimately responsible for their health and safety, and who they would contact in the case of an injury. The respondents for the most part, five out of eight, agreed that the responsibility for an injury due to a lack of training would have dependent on the specific context of the injury and the events that had occurred.

### Problems with Co-Workers

Respondent were asked if they felt the training that their co-workers received was adequate or not, and additionally asked if their co-workers posed a risk to their health and safety on the job. All respondents had concerns with co-workers and the training that they had received. Responses regarding the training of their co-workers are as follows:

*Pathetic, some people who sleep through the class and pass and I have to rely my life on them, that's pathetic. That's actually scary. I refuse to work with people like that. I like to go home after a day's work. People, like they hire vary, I want to say sketchy people, questionable people. But hey, what do I know, I'm only there to get paid as much as they are. But at least, personally I know myself, I know what to do if there is a problem. I don't know about them because they sleep or they didn't pay attention. It's just a scary situation. (Respondent 2)*

*It varies. A lot of guys come in and they have a lot of outside training or they're older gentlemen that actually take something seriously. For the most part I'd say that the training is inadequate and so the skill level is inadequate overall. (Respondent 1)*

*Well I have had some experiences of just horrible co-workers. You know both a combination of both temporary staff as well as permanent staff that have been working side by side but in both cases it just seems like a lack of mindfulness or awareness of their actions and they jeopardize the safety of others. Just by not paying attention, not following protocol. Lack of mindfulness is the best way to encapsulate it. They are just not paying attention. It's like they don't have concern for themselves or for others and it just seems like ignorance. I know it's a strong word but it comes down to a lack of knowledge even though we all have the same training or theoretically we have the same training. (Respondent 8)*

*Absolutely not. As I just mentioned there are a lot of events that were evidence to argue that there could have been a lot more done in the training because it was a lot of shortcut, close minded behaviour and just incompetence in most cases. (Respondent 7)*

They were also asked if their co-workers were a hazard to their health and safety and again the responses were in agreement that co-workers do pose a health and safety concern for some of the reasons outlined below.

*Depends on the worker. If the worker has a bad habit of just neglecting his work and just shows up and sleeps and doesn't really care about himself than that puts me in the corner and scares me a bit. Cause what if my life comes down to it and he can't do his job because he can't recall what to do? That scares me. Also it should scare placement agencies because they're hiring these people and that's a liability. And that's not good because if I get hurt and they are putting me with people who have no education or no training, proper training, with me I will definitely go after them [TSA]. (Respondent 2)*

*Yeah, sometimes their attitude is not there either and that is a big part of working too. It doesn't matter what type of training you have. Some of them don't want to learn. They want to do status quo. (Respondent 1)*

*Oh they definitely have been. If it wouldn't have been for the PPE, the personal protective equipment that I was wearing I would have been maimed with molten zinc on my face and body. By the time I had to take my visor and my smock and my work shirt*

*and then my undershirt off, my undershirt was turning brown from the heat and that was probably the worst workplace incident I've had while working. When I reported that incident to the supervisor on shift he said suck it up because if you don't want to be here we have 100 other people who will do the job. That was the time I decided I wasn't going to be working anymore at that place. That was the major safety incident due to someone not following protocol. They chose to smash a paddle with molten zinc and what happens is that once its air cooled it gets sticky almost like a jelly but it's still molten because it's solid state, when it's cool it is completely solid. So if it's anywhere in its liquid form it's very hot. That was an example of co-worker lack of mindfulness. (Respondent 8)*

*I had people in there and there was people in there from somewhere else and when burning permits and air permits and stuff aren't filled out and aren't being done, especially air testing, that can be deadly. Burning permits are bad because then the people who need to know that there's hot work going on don't know which could have really bad implications too. (Respondent 4)*

There is a clear indication according to the respondents that the training of co-workers is not up to standard and varies. It is also dependent on the characteristics and willingness of the co-workers themselves to learn and be safe. There is a reported issue with a lack of concern and mindfulness, especially in relation to training where some co-workers are apparently not paying attention or they are sleeping. Issues such as employee screening and selection is suggested by the responses as an issue for workplace safety, and additionally the attitudes of co-workers towards health and safety are also an issue. This effects the safety of everyone, since employees

who endanger their own lives may fail to realize that they are also endangering the lives of all those around them. The majority of work in surface mining involves group tasks and these responses are important in that regard.

### Individual Job Safety

Respondents were asked if, in general, they feel safe in their workplace. The majority of the respondents, six of eight, explained that they do feel safe although it is due to their own due diligence and process to make it so. The other two respondents revealed that their safety depends.

*Yeah because if I don't I get it fixed so that I do. (Respondent 4)*

*Always, because I was always aware of my surroundings, I was always aware of hazards because I made it a point to. Safety begins and ends at the door and I always wanted to make sure I was going home and I was always aware and I was always looking and I was always attentive so. I had no reason to feel otherwise and if there were any doubt I was not afraid to deny or refuse to work and ask questions so never did I feel uncomfortable. (Respondent 7)*

*It all depends on where you work. Depends on who you work for and what you're doing. There is all kinds of situations that I might not have felt the safest in a rescue position where obviously there wasn't enough thought put in the work, in how it is going to get done safely. Or depending on where you are working, the environment, if I am not given*

*enough information on exactly what I am doing. If it is labour or I need this, am I going to be outside? So I mean a lot of that plays a role. If I don't bring a mask and I am exposed to the dust I wasn't told there was going to be dust and the host company isn't providing equipment for me but overall yeah. I mean, you can always deny work if you don't feel safe, so if you don't feel safe. (Respondent 5)*

*I felt as safe as I made myself I guess. I tried making myself aware of the hazards. They do, to give credit to some of the on staff trainers when they get on the job they were able to explain stuff well enough for you to do the job safely. It's just whether or not you paid attention to that and applied the knowledge and a little common sense. (Respondent 8)*

*Like I said it comes down to my qualifications, my training, and the person I'm working with. If all those three are up to par than yes I feel comfortable. If one of those are not there, then I do have some questions and concerns. (Respondent 2)*

It would seem that the safety of the respondents was relatively good due to their own willingness to learn and correct situations. Safety also depended on the job they were working, who they were working with, the training they had been given, and the information they had received regarding the specific working situation.

### Having a Voice in the Workplace

Respondents were asked whether or not they have a voice in their workplace and if they can participate in health, safety, and training. Five respondents said they were unable to



participate and had no voice, while two participants said they could, and one participant said yes although with problems. The TSA that the worker worked for did not seem to make a difference in terms of participation as employees from the same TSA had varying levels of workplace participation.

*Eventually I could because I looked for that. I can't speak for other people but I feel as though there is probably a strong chance that other people didn't get that because if you didn't look for it and fight for it then you didn't get it. (Respondent 3)*

*Not at all, this is a joke. I remember working at the acid plant at (client 1b) and one of the contractors came out of an acid pipeline, I guess the tailings. They stomped their boots while people, like it was on a grid so they are on top, they are probably 20 feet in the air but it's all a grid so it's all fenced in properly. So they stomp their boots when people are walking under you and acid was going down hitting the people on their backs and going down their coveralls and I expressed my concern but they just laughed. So I went to their supervisor which was my supervisor and explained my concern. They don't care about our safety, people are walking underneath them and getting burned by this acid. He just shrugged it off, the supervisor, he didn't care. I didn't like it and it just goes to show you what people do and what kind of people can get away with stuff because they think they are more powerful than other people. I could tell everybody and you need to tell the right person, a person that cares. If you don't tell that person that does care then nothing is going to happen. (Respondent 2)*

This is a long response although everything spoken is important and provides an important example of a dangerous situation that remains when employee's voices are not heard. There is a clear health concern when acid is falling on workers below and yet the supervisor in this situation did not care enough to stop and correct the issue which is unfortunate. Employees concerns being overlooked continues in two of the response below with the final response being more favourable.

*Numerous times that I've mentioned and other people have mentioned and it gets brushed off. I think they are more worried about their money and their contracts but there has been other times where you bring an issue up and they're on it right away so very seldomly. But normally due to their due diligence that it occurs for the most part.*

*(Respondent 1)*

*Safety concerns if they're minor maybe were kind of addressed, any sort of moderate to major. You know my experience has been kind of mixed like put a lock out tag on it and get a millwright to look at it if it happens that shift or if the next guy coming on shift is "no I'm going to use it anyways". It's been a mixed experience I guess, some things went according to protocol, some things didn't s it's hard to say. (Respondent 8)*

*Yup, it is a big talk actually we discuss health and the safety of us and the workers and or even at a labour job we are discussing. It seems we have a good rapport with the bigger companies more than some of these hired contract companies just the grunt boot labourers where we are the more younger sort of intelligent sort of workers but we are*

*also not afraid to go right to the tool crib and grab whatever we need and they will give it to us. Like you should be setting a precedent. (Respondent 5)*

Two respondents explained they were able to participate in health and safety while another respondent also said they could participate although they had to fight to be heard. The rest of the respondents said they were unable to participate and that most issues or incidences were never heard or were overlooked. One of the reasons given is that the TSAs care more about money and getting the job done and that health and safety concerns get left behind.

## Unionization

What can be said is that there are clear issues with unionization with the respondents. Issues include being unionized and not being aware that they are unionized. Those that were unionized and realized this responded unfavourably in regards to the union that represented them. Some of the responses when asked if they were unionized are as follows:

*Apparently it is part of the labourers union but I have heard that someone does actually exist but you would be hard pressed to get him on the phone. It's not done anything although I keep paying into it I don't really know what it really does for me. But I did get a \$20 gift certificate for Canadian Tire for my hard work at being safe. (Respondent 5)*

*I believe (TSA 2c) had a union, I can't remember what it was called but they didn't do anything for us. We paid dues and we never here of them. Their phone numbers didn't work or it would go to an answering machine. Is it (union 4a).. can't remember it's not*

*really important, but it was an association not a union. I believe we paid five bucks a year, it was a minimal amount but they didn't do anything for us and then they have contract talks every couple years and no one was ever invited. I don't know there was a lot here say where the money went to. Most people didn't even know about the association. (Respondent 1)*

*Well, I know (TSA 2c) is but that was a joke. I don't know if (TSA 2e) was? I think it was the (union 4b) and I'm not 100 percent sure on that one but it wasn't much of a union. If you had a complaint or you couldn't fight for your job because if you got fired and it wasn't your fault and you tried to fight it, no one was fighting for you because there was no one there. You couldn't even get a hold of them. For instance, at the acid plant I was going to grieve something like that because I was not [at fault], I didn't like that I couldn't even get a hold of anybody. I went to talk to my boss and I asked for them and they couldn't provide me anything so it was pretty bad. But I'm paying for something, a union. (Respondent 2)*

The union discussed here was problematic and apparently a useless entity according to the respondents' statements above. Employees are paying union dues for a union that they are either unaware exists, or one that they are aware of although have no communication with and receive no benefits from. Respondents who were unaware that there was a union were asked if a union would benefit the workers at their TSA.

*It would have pros and cons. It would have pros in that it would keep the workers highly protected and considered on the worksite. There would be cons because there would be people that would take advantage of the system like they have in the past so it's like a pro and a con but it's a necessary implement in the workplace but that's Canada wide. It's not just for the temporary staffing agency that goes for it, its workplace wide. Unions are important. (Respondent 6)*

*Unions are always beneficial in regards to anything or regarding safety or even progression of your career. A unionized worker is more protected than a non-union worker. The pros and cons to a union would definitely benefit an agency such as a temporary agency, without getting into names, because it would definitively give them the ability to have that thought of job security and there would be no funny business regarding long term stability when really it's in fact short term work. There would be a lot more awareness of what we're involved in. I would be for it. (Respondent 7)*

*I don't know because there is such a high turnover rate in those places, I would question how effective it would be. There are some people who really, you need to get rid of them, they are just not safe and if you had a union you would probably have to fight for it and I don't think that is necessarily a good thing. A lot of people who do this work just do it as quick fix, they don't really care and they just hide behind unions if they were getting in trouble (Respondent 4)*

*It's like a third party, it's like a bridge between you and your employer and the union is well versed in health and safety and your own personal safety, the safety of yourself, your co-workers as a whole. I find you can feel more comfortable in that they are going to ask the right questions and they're going to present them to your employer and there's not going to be that pressure, unspoken pressure between you and your employer. I think it would be beneficial and make the employee a lot more comfortable. The union knows, the union is looking out for your best interest as an employee. I believe it would be beneficial especially in this regard being that you're essentially employed for a very short period of time and the work itself gets treated that way too. The contract is only for a minimal amount of time, let's just get them in there and make the money on the contract and were out and then do another one. (Respondent 3)*

Above responses were mixed. It is unfortunate that two of these respondents felt that a union in their TSA would be beneficial although they were unaware that their TSA was unionized. Two respondents felt that a TSA union would benefit them by fighting for them and overseeing their workplace although an absent union presence suggests failure. The respondents were then asked how they felt about unions in general to get their perspective feelings on unionization. Four respondents felt that unions are good for workers while the other four respondents felt that unions are both good and bad. The responses mentioned above are included in this analysis, and the additional responses are included below for those who knew their TSA was unionized.

*Well I mean unions are great for people, they increase wages and fair wages that coincide with interest rates and general rise in prices of everything, general commodities and you have to fight the corporation to give you more because obviously the government is not going to back you. Unions are great for that. I mean the downside maybe to a union is you know there is people who you know you just can't get rid of, they just stick around like leaches and work up their talk to get up to the ladder of the union and they are so embedded in friends with every high chiefdon in the union that you can never touch them and they might be the thorns that make your life difficult on a day to day basis. But you can't get rid of them. So there is some problems, economic gains but there is definitively some negative gains for day to day work. (Respondent 5)*

A reoccurring response in regards to unions is that they protect workers, although they also protect workers who should not be protected. Additionally, there is an expressed fear above that these workers that are problematic for whatever reason can work their way into union politics. Despite this potential problem, respondents showed a majority favour for unions in general.

*I mean the labour union guy, some of them got pretty good and they can stop a job or stop and correct without recourse that's been problems in the past where you stop and correct and then you get fired off a job for no particular reason. Like you're trying to work safe but the company doesn't want to that. So I think that would help then, having a union steward there to talk to might help things out. (Respondent 1)*

*I'm a union person. I think it's a good thing to have. If they're a legit union they will defend you if you're in the right. If you're in the wrong that's a totally different story. But if you didn't do anything wrong, like you believe you didn't do anything wrong then they should fight for you and that's what you're paying them to do. They're fighting for you to get your proper training, your proper equipment, making sure you're getting paid right and correctly. That's what they're there for. Make sure you're getting all these benefits.*

*(Respondent 2)*

The responses suggest that unions would be good for workers in the TSA industry, although there are some cons. Respondents reported unions being good for improving health and safety, pay, to protect workers, help with communication between the TSA and workers, and to avoid getting any “funny business” from their employers. The downside involved protecting workers who are a hazard to other employees and some that some workers abuse the union system. There is a clear issue with (union 4a) since some respondents who are/were a part of this union are unaware of the union's existence. Additionally, those who were aware that they were unionized have an unfavourable view of this union and do not see (union 4a) as being useful in terms of health and safety, and workplace improvements.

### Improvements for TSAs

Respondents were asked what temporary staffing agencies are doing right and what they are doing wrong in terms of health, safety and training, and also made suggestions for improvements. Only a few respondents were able to provide what their TSA has been doing right and is illustrated below.



*The confidence to make people feel that they were safe based on the way they presented themselves, the way they carried themselves, the way that the offices were set up, it was convincing to think that there was a lot of benefit to get from it but at times it just didn't seem so. (Respondent 7)*

*Well I don't know what the other companies do but I do see that (TSA 2c) does give you health and safety training. They will take you to the end of health and safety. Every course you could possibly take they will pay for, you just have to show up. So there is quite a few people pursuing health and safety or have finished health and safety. If other companies aren't doing that then maybe they should be doing that to increase health and safety in their own company. (Respondent 5)*

*Well, at least they provide their training. (Respondent 2)*

*They are at least saying that they are giving it to you [training] and they do make you sit down and go through at least the slides so depending on the way you look at it it's your safety so it is valuable for you to pay attention to these things. (Respondent 8)*

*On paper they met the requirements for somebody to be on that particular mine sites property. That was it. (Respondent 3)*

*They presented a lot of information but it was all relevant and valid. The last time I did it, there was a lot of stuff I needed to know and it could have been really overwhelming but it wasn't. It was ok this is what you needed to know and this is why. Cause this happened before so we want to make sure it doesn't happen again or in case. They actually might have given me more than I needed which I prefer. I'd rather not be the person to not know that stuff. Like I said if I can control it I will. I definitely think that some other companies need to evaluate what they're teaching people or maybe how they get affirmation because a lot of the stuff that I learned was done interactively so you were interacting with whoever was teaching it as well there was usually some sort of quiz or test or whatever so that you can go over the knowledge again. (Respondent 4)*

*Respondent 4* for the most part was the only respondent who gave a really favourable response to the TSA. Other above comments involved the benefit of them providing training and making workers sit down and go through the material, while also providing the option for health and safety professional training. Others unfortunately mentioned sarcastic positives for the companies themselves such as looking good on paper and making it look “convincible” that there were benefits to working for them. There were also areas discussed that should be considered for improvement.

*I think they were just too focused on the short term goal of employing people to fulfill spots without realizing that people are here for a career perhaps or for long term stability and in order to have the manpower they need. They needed to sell to people that there was a future and so there is a bit of dishonesty. A bit of rush and just to be efficient*

*to fulfill their contracts. It's just a lot of smoke, a lot of noise and at the end of the day there is just holes in it because there is nothing honest about it. Opportunity short term, and promising long term. It's all over the place. It's really hard to answer that one.*

*(Respondent 7)*

*Everything costs money. For instance, first aid alone, if they provide that, that's about \$500 for a course and if they got 20 people do the math, that's a lot of money. You have to do the training for SCBA, WHMIS, ZES, fall arrest. There is numerous other things. I can promise you they are going to be cutting corners. They should have their own workers that can train their people so the costs are down. But make the class last at least a few days longer. When I first started it was good. Towards the end I noticed they were cutting back on a lot of things like safety equipment. You had to buy your own safety equipment. Which was kind of useless cause when I first started I used to get gloved, coveralls, helmets, stuff like that. All your protection, all your PPE but towards the end it was like get your own stuff. (Respondent 2)*

*They are not holding themselves accountable for their employees accountable to the training that they are trying to get. I think if there is some way for them to ensure that individuals are going to sit there and retain the information more than just the four question test at the end that you get 3 chances on. Don't make the test so easy and make it so that not everybody can do it and you might have people paying attention and actually trying. (Respondent 8)*

*I think there is still somewhat of a stigma. “Oh it’s just like a paper cut... never mind.”  
The littlest stuff I think they still try to sweep under the rug to keep their safety records better. (Respondent 4)*

Areas that were mentioned that could be considered for improvement include: a lack of training, sub-standard training and equipment, trying to hide or not recording injuries to make their safety records look better, lack of accountability, need to make tests more difficult where employees can actually fail, everything seems rushed, priority over the jobs and not workers, and large turnover rates.

## Reprisals

Although this was not a specific aspect of the study and I did not ask any questions specifically related to reprisals, two respondents mentioned that they had received reprisals from their employers and I feel this should be mentioned here briefly.

*Some people go through some flack cause they open their mouths, cause of safety concerns. Hush, hush type things, so people get in \*\*\*\* for things like that. So that’s why people don’t talk, so that’s why people get away with the stupidest things. That’s why people get hurt. Or they feel like they are like their employer thinks that they’re “oh stop ratting on people, nobody likes a rat”, or the employer will be like “I will look into it” but really they just like “don’t bother me I’m busy” or “don’t bother me I’m doing something else.” (Respondent 2)*

*I don't want to mention names but there was a worker that was rather aggressive and what he wanted, was going to do anything to make sure that happened and was overreacting to a lot of things. A new employee, and I would approach my supervisor and he would just brush it off saying he's new, but really he didn't come and talk to the guy or anything else like that. In the end I ended up getting released from the site and my partner at the time too got released from the site. (Respondent 1)*

*Respondent 2* mentioned how employees will get in trouble for bringing up health and safety concerns and encourage workers to stay quiet while *respondent 1* mentioned a specific incident that helps support the statement from *respondent 2*. It should also be important to note that following the situation described by *respondent 1*, they were never given immediate work or transferred to a different job, it was strictly just removal from that particular job.

## Final Thoughts

All respondents were given the opportunity to give their final thought regarding health, safety, training, and/or unionization, or to add anything additionally that they would like to share that had not already been covered during the interview. It was decided to give these respondents a voice and report each of their responses below as some of them had requested.

*I think they can be a good thing for short term employment I guess but they need to be structured a little bit differently, again under a governing body might improve. The only thing about it is it prevents companies, say for example (contract 3b), actually hiring full time employees because there is no benefits with placement agencies. You get to the point*

*where you actually get your benefits and you pay an arm and a leg and they don't give you anything anyways so why even bother with them. I have been on their benefit plan and it wasn't very good. (Respondent 1)*

*I just think that the owners of these places are cutting corners and they should look into providing proper and legit training and also the unions should be very well recognized within the community so everyone could participate. It's very discouraging, you can't rely on these companies, if you have family you can't rely on them. I would just say smarten up. (Respondent 2)*

*I just like the fact that you brought up unionization for these part-time staffing agencies. I think it would make a world of difference. You'd be able to voice your concerns and feel comfortable about it and it's that union's job to bridge that gap between you and your employer and make sure you're going to work feeling safe and comfortable. (Respondent 3)*

*I think they are definitely getting better. They are better than they were but there are some that could still improve. Like I said, if they were to standardize the training somehow, I don't know how you could facilitate that but, if it could be standardized across the board for all of them it would make everybody's life easier. (Respondent 4)*

*Health and safety, you got your safety officers. The biggest thing here is that there is a lot of politics in a union or in health and safety and that's the problem. Too many politics,*

*no body's focusing on the job, nobody is focusing on the individual. All they care about is looking good, doing their job and making it look like they are doing something. When they are forgetting even in our job of rescue, we are not doing anything, but we are pretending, well not pretending, but basically looking busy. Looking like we are actually doing something. But the difference is we do not have to get into people's faces but they do and the thing is they just want a lot of them to take it to another level. They have to write a report on you, and they make you feel uncomfortable in the whole process and they have no social skills doing it but that's their job. But it's not their job, there is people in there who should not be in there. Let's just put it that way. So health and safety, unions, there is a lot of people who are in that job, in that position and they shouldn't be so that's one of my biggest problems with health and safety and unions. There is a lot of people who shouldn't have that job. (Respondent 5)*

*The union that is really looking out for a common ground is the best type of union to have because you will have the most people satisfied. And I think that having more mixed forms of training with regards to health and safety would be the best type of approach to use if you want people to actually retain the information and then this way you can also do some verification that people are doing the learning because you will have the instructor who's able to look at you and say "do you understand?" So I think that's kind of the missing links in the health and safety piece. (Respondent 8)*

The above final comments suggest issues with TSAs, such as how they do not pay employees enough or provide enough work. Respondents also suggested that unions should be recognized, that workers need to be able to participate more in health and safety, and that TSAs

need to provide better training. Workers are supposedly placed in unsafe working positions that they should not be in, and there are issues with the internal politics of TSAs that neglect certain workers while offering favourable attention to others.



## Chapter 6

### Discussion

Mangum, Mayall and Nelson (1985) mention that many TSA workers are initially low skilled and choose to work for TSAs so that they can receive on the job training in hopes of becoming more marketable for permanent work. Individuals who work for TSAs often do so in order to gain experience and skills that will make them appear more marketable for future job prospects (Howe, 1986). The responses from this study suggests that these listed benefits may not emerge as TSA workers may feel “shackled” by their TSA employer. This was stated by a respondent as being due to an apparent premium that TSA companies charge employers who wish to permanently hire their employees. Unfortunately the respondents pursuit of networking and gaining access to employers is stalled by the politics and restrictions placed on workers by their TSAs.

Due to globalization and a greater demand for flexible work, highly skilled and full-time employment is leaving, and the life-time job is disappearing as well (Beck, 2000). Kochan et al. (1994) agree with Beck (2000) in that flexibility is made available to employers by allowing them to temporarily hire workers with their fluctuating business needs. Beck additionally added that the North American labour market under this type of politics is demanding for a more flexible workforce, one that is more precarious and where employees can be fired much more easily. This may help explain why the TSA workers of this study are experiencing precarious working hours and working positions. The nature of the work is temporary and the name *temporary staffing agency* says it right in the name itself. There are issues with this move from permanent to casual TSA work in terms of health, safety, and training. Precarious forms of work are more likely to partake in dangerous jobs. The Centre for Disease Control and Prevention

(2002) suggest that numerous hazardous jobs have been shifted from full time workers to those of more precarious forms of work such as TSA workers. There are also issues with employees being less familiar with worksites and particular jobs as Kotchan et al. (1994) have mentioned. The findings here also point out that there are hazards and health and safety issues associated with this precarious form of employment where such employees are often unfamiliar with their workplaces.

It has been suggested that the risks involved with the changing structure of work should be looked at, and one of the areas for inquiry should involve employee health and safety training (Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, 2002) which is what this research has attempted to begin exploring. This research also follows the centre's suggestion that research needs to investigate health and safety training of contingent forms of work and how this training relates to perceptions and incidence of safety in the workplaces of such individuals.

The study revealed that the majority of respondents had to pay for at least one or more of their necessary training sessions. This may have to do with the suggestion that employers find costs associated with training workers for short term jobs to be excessive which is a major factor in their use of TSAs (Howe, 1986; Mangum, Mayall & Nelson, 1985). Respondents have revealed the high costs that TSAs would have to spend for training all their employees and also the problem with other companies poaching workers or workers leaving to work for other TSAs. This is supported by Kvasnicka (2008) who explains that more formal training is not given since such training makes an employee more marketable and creates a risk of employees being poached by other companies. At least in the current situation of having TSA worker's pay for some of their own training, there will be less lost investments associated with employees leaving

for other TSAs. However, it is unclear why TSA workers are not paid hourly for the training they are given.

Autor (2001) explains that TSAs normally provide very general forms of training and do not pay their employees an hourly wage for training. This is true for the sake of this study since half of the respondents did not get paid hourly for their training, although there is no reason why some got paid hourly while others did not. There are also reported financial strains from paying for their own training and not being paid hourly, and is why it should be no surprise that the majority of respondents felt that their employment agency should pay for all their training. Perhaps this can take place by working the associated costs for training into the contracts with their client companies as mentioned by respondents. There is also a need to make improvements to the current training TSA workers receive.

All respondents have mentioned that they have had various forms of training that were inadequate. The largest issues mentioned with regards to training is that the training lacked interaction, was not hands on, and was not frequent enough. This agrees with the suggestions by Kvasnicka (2008) and Booth, Francesconi and Frank (2002) that TSA workers are less likely to receive on the job training in comparison to those not working for TSAs and in the same industry. This might additionally be due to formal training leading to their workers being poached based on their increased skills and training (Kvasnicka, 2008). When TSAs actually decide to increase their training, they often do so out of expanded competition in order to make employees more marketable to clients (Autor, 2001), although this does not necessarily translate into a higher quality of training. Some respondents have suggested getting training more often, such as refresher courses, to feel more confident in their jobs. The lack of training is supported by Booth, Francesconi and Frank (2002) who mention that TSA workers have been found to

receive 9-12 less training days per year in comparison to full time employees. This is unfortunate since a lack of training and instruction is a main factor in the frequency of injuries in TSA work (Fabiano, Curro, Reverberi & Pastorino, 2008). The respondents expressed desire for less computer based training and more updated and interactive training is also important towards safety and reducing injuries since it is found that the quality of training, specific to certain types of work, and in relation to health and safety, also greatly influence the occurrence of injuries. This erosion in on the job training due to the increase of temporary staffing agency work has left TSA workers at greater risk for injury (Virtanen et al., 2005). This poor quality of training can be seen in the expressed difference between TSA training and that of the client companies that TSAs work for.

The majority of respondents expressed that the training that client mining companies provided is perceived to be better than what they had received from their TSA. Respondents have suggested that client companies give better training because they have more money than TSAs and also because client company employees are permanent and are therefore responsible for their workers. Booth, Francesconi and Frank (2002) have also found in their study that TSA workers are less satisfied with the training they receive in comparison to permanent employees. This is partially due to the companies that use TSA workers and their perceived minimal obligation to train such employees, and additionally due to a perceived lack of responsibility for such workers (Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, 2002). One respondent mentioned that the training client company employees receive is also more frequent and of higher quality. Once again this may come down to money. As Brym (2002) explains, that for Marx, efficiency for capitalism not only means lower wages, but also means as little investment as possible needed to be put into the improvement of working conditions. Since client companies have much more money than TSAs,

then perhaps the expense does not seem as great as it would for the same training if it were provided by TSAs. TSAs have a surplus of labour which also makes training costly. Perhaps client companies could invest in the training of all workers who perform work on their property, although this normally comes down to an issue of responsibility for TSA workers (Kochan et al., 1994).

The same confusion also exists regarding who is legally and ultimately responsible for the health and safety of the workers (Kalleberg, 2000; Kochan et al., 1994). There are responsibilities for workers, clients and TSAs that need to be addressed. To briefly recap, employees have responsibilities that include wearing proper personal protective equipment, working safely, and to report any hazardous or unsafe working conditions (Ministry of Labour, 2015b), while employers also have responsibilities under the OHSA that include providing training and supervision that will help protect a worker, notify employees of any hazards, and take every reasonable precaution necessary in order to protect workers from any harm and hazard (Ministry of Labour, 2003). Despite this being clear in the OHSA, there must be some disregard and lack of education on the act since there were varying responses in the study as to who is ultimately responsible for the health and safety of TSA workers. It is astounding that two respondents thought that all responsibility rested with themselves, and that only one respondent out of the eight knew that the responsibility rests with everyone. This is made clear by the rules set out in the OHSA. The other confusion lies between whether or not both client companies and TSAs share responsibility.

The Ministry of Labour (2015) clears this up by stating that both the employment agencies and client companies share the responsibility for informing and protecting temporary staffing workers from various hazards (Ministry of Labour, 2015). This does not clarify which

party supplies the training since training in my experience has come from either the client company or the staffing agency and rarely as a joint effort. Furthermore, this section does not specify who is directly responsible under various circumstances when an injury occurs.

Respondents were additionally asked who they would contact in the circumstance of an injury and only one respondent gave the correct response that the first aid and both the client company and the TSA would need to be notified. As illustrated by the Ministry of Labour (2015), in the case where an injury occurs, TSA employees are advised to notify first aid, the staffing agency and the client company of the injury (Ministry of Labour, 2015). While the rest of the employees would likely receive the proper attention at some point due to letting someone know, one respondent's situation would have been unclear since they reported that they would have had absolutely no idea what to do. Not knowing what to do in an emergency at work could not only be problematic for the worker, but also for their co-workers, TSAs and the client companies.

All respondents expressed issues with the working habits of their co-workers and how they pose a threat to their health and safety. Respondents expressed concern that co-workers did not pay attention during training and for the most part failed to take pride in their job and educate themselves on the apparent dangers. TSA workers need to take training seriously and TSAs should develop a way of encouraging employees to take it seriously. The respondents of this study were all over the age of thirty and had years of experience, while it was mentioned by respondents that their co-workers are often young, inexperienced and uneducated. Cummings and Kreiss (2008) mentioned that injuries likely occur since contingent workers are found to be less familiar with workplace safety and training related to dangerous job tasks. This parallels with a study from Spain which revealed that the prevalence of contingent worker injuries decreased with the amount of time spent on a particular task (Cummings & Kreiss, 2008). In

other words, the co-workers they speak of may be unsafe due to their lack of experience and time in the field. Additionally, the respondents expressed various forms of dissatisfaction with their jobs and can also relate to their responses regarding co-workers. Gyekye (2015) found that workers with low job satisfaction are more likely to report that their co-workers are more likely to ignore health and safety and take chances in the workplace. Dissatisfaction could also be from not working with the same employees all the time and therefor never really get the chance to get to know or help out co-workers. This can be seen as alienation from fellow workers and has been explained through Marx. Marx (1932) sees workers as being alienated from the process of their labour and also from their fellow workers. Additionally, workers may see other workers as competition for their jobs and wages, in which case, this creates a lack of community and solidarity in the workplace (Marx, 1932) and can also be a reason why the respondents discuss poor working practices of their co-workers. Either way, reporting that co-workers are seen as a hazard to health and safety at work is a serious concern and also is seen as an indicator for safe workplaces. The importance of this is discussed by Turner, Chmiel, Herscovis, Sandy and Walls (2010) who mention that feeling that your co-workers work safely and support safe working practices has been associated with safer workplaces. Surprisingly, the majority of respondents reported feeling safe in the workplace, although this was mainly due to their own ability and desire to ask questions and correct dangerous situations. The only real issue rested with their ability to voice concerns to their employer.

Gunningham (2008) has stated that the nature of contingent work creates barriers for the promotion of health and safety and also places contingent workers in vulnerable positions. Under the working relations between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, the work is completely controlled and decided upon by the employer (Simon, 1994). This has perhaps created an

environment that makes it difficult for TSA workers to voice their concerns and participate in health, safety and training in their workplace. The majority of respondents revealed that they are unable to participate in health, safety and training in their workplace, and while they can complain, no one tends to listen. Problems with authority can be responsible for this. Authority works from a top down method, where the higher powers of management transmit to, and govern, the supervisors who occupy the lower power, and then we find the workers at the very bottom with no authority in the workplace (Bailey & Gayle, 2003). This form of workplace regulation and power has caused what Weber has declared an iron cage of bureaucracy (Ritzer, 2002). Respondents explained that they would tell their supervisor although nothing ever transpired. Additionally there was actually encouragement made for TSA workers to stay quiet about safety concerns. Aronsson's (1999) belief is correct in this case as he suggested that it may be difficult for contingent workers to voice their concerns regarding poor working environments and workplace safety improvements. This is also supported by Marx (1932) in that workers have no say, unless given by their employers, in their daily job processes (Marx, 1932) and workplace participation in health, safety and training can be seen as a part of this. Aronsson (1999) also believes the possibility that, due to their short-term involvement with an employer, contingent workers may keep their opinions and critiques of their short-term work to themselves since they will not reap any long term benefits. This can link back to the earlier discussion that if employees are not satisfied with their jobs then safety is unlikely to improve.

The lack of unionization is often seen as a reason for the lack of employee voices being heard in the workplace. Unions are seen as essential for the communication of employee needs in health and safety, although nonstandard forms of employment such as TSAs are not often unionized (Johnstone et al., 2005; Gunningham, 2008). Furthermore, as globalization expands,



unions, bargaining power and gains are running into obstacles (Beck, 2000). Unions in this case are finding it difficult to organize the increasingly fragmented labour force which also has implications for contract negotiations and workplace improvements (Beck, 2000). The downside to this is that respondents worked for a TSA that was unionized and the majority of respondents had no idea they were unionized. Additionally, other respondents knew they were unionized although they showed dislike for that particular union. For whatever reason, (union 4a) has apparently failed to be present in their workplace and to have an efficient open line of communication with their workers. For the most part, respondents felt that unions were good for workplaces although there were some concerns. Unions were seen as good in the sense that they can open up communication between the workers and their employers, they can improve health, safety and training, and they would protect workers. Some respondents believe that training and health and safety tends to improve with unionization, a view that is supported by Kochan et al. (1994). Unionization has also been found to improve working tasks and make them safer, especially considering that non-unionized employees are more likely to accept and perform unsafe work (Gunningham, 2008).

All respondents had suggested areas that TSAs could be improving in. Some of the concerns involved improving training and frequency, decrease turnover rates, place more priority over workers rather than profits, and have accountability for their actions. These all seemed to be things that have been discussed throughout this discussion. I do believe however that Giddens brings up an important point why there are issues with health, safety, training and accountability and may help explain some of the issues presented by the respondents. According to Giddens (2000), risk is seen as potential hazards being assessed in relation to future opportunities and gains as it has become something that is calculated. Additionally, Giddens (2000) points out that

companies are insured, and it is such that removes their feelings of accountability.

Accountability however is still present in the law, such as the rules within the OHSA.

There are two main observations that I had made throughout my interviews that I noticed had to do with matters of illegality. Two respondents had mentioned instances of reprisals for bringing up concerns with health and safety issues while another respondent had mentioned how an employer had failed to correct a health and safety concern regarding work being performed directly above workers. The issue with reprisals came from one respondent who was sent home for bringing up a problematic co-worker. This respondent was sent home without any immediate work and was seen by the respondent as a repercussion for bring up a health and safety concern. Another respondent discussed how employees are encouraged by their employer to stay quiet regarding health and safety concerns and that they are often in trouble whenever they do. While it is suggested that contingent workers are more likely to be involved in risky and hazardous tasks (Gunningham, 2008), and that such employees are less likely to report unsafe work out of fear of losing that contract (Quinlan, 1999; Gunningham, 2008), it seems that reprisals from employers and encouragement to not speak up may also be the factor here. In terms of employer reprisals or threats towards temporary staffing workers, it is illegal for both client and staffing agency employers to do so in response to an employee following the OHSA or exercising their rights outlined in the act (Ministry of Labour, 2015). In the event that employees feel they have had reprisals against them, they may file a complaint with the Ontario Labour relations Board (OLRB) and in which case an investigation may be provided against the employer (Ministry of Labour, 2015). Perhaps this is something that should be taught to TSA workers. In my past years working for a TSA I was never once made aware of this and there were instances where I would have found this useful.

The other issue had to do with a health and safety concern regarding workers who were working above and dropping acid down below onto the respondent. The acid falling down from above should be of enough concern to have the employer do something to correct the issue since the employer has the legal duty to take every reasonable precaution necessary to protect their workers according to the OHSA (Ministry of Labour, 2003). Additionally it is also illegal to allow a worker to work directly below other workers, especially when the area is also roped off and the work is not being performed in conjunction with the work above (Ministry of Labour 2003). The worker was unaware of the work being performed above in an area that had been roped off. When areas are roped off due to work being performed above, there should not be anyone working underneath such work.

## Chapter 7

### Conclusion

Mining and minerals processing is a staple industry of Sudbury, Ontario and Sudbury is considered a world class mining centre (City of Greater Sudbury, 2012; DeStefano, 2008). Additionally, there more than 300 mining support companies throughout Sudbury's mining industry and TSAs are among them (City of Greater Sudbury, 2012; DeStefano, 2008). Despite numerous efforts, the incidence of injuries in mining are significantly high (Donoghue, 2004; Groves, Kecojevic & Lomljenovic, 2007). The Ministry of Labour (2014) further reveal that the incidence of injuries and fatalities has not significantly improved in Ontario's mining sector. Contract workers represent one third of mining workers, although their representation within those injured in the mining sector account for more than their proportion (Gunningham, 2008: 349). Furthermore, among these contingent workers, Connelly & Gallagher (2004) suggest that temporary staffing agency workers are the most visible form of contingent workers. Health and safety is an issue in mining and should also be of concern here in Sudbury. The issue with health and safety improvements in mining is that there is a lack of focus on TSA workers. There is also a lack of literature on TSA work, especially in regards to surface mining. The study has attempted to begin filling the gap in this much needed area of research.

It is from my experiences in this field of work that has led me to discover many unaddressed questions and problems in relation to workplace safety and responsibility. This study has provided an opportunity to explore some of these issues and see if other TSA workers have experienced similar issues. The main question in this case was: *what are the perceptions and experiences of health, safety and training according to temporary staffing agency employees working in Sudbury, Ontario's surface mining operations*. Despite facing numerous barriers and

resistance to gaining participants, eight respondents were interviewed and gave this study valuable insight and information regarding their perceptions of health, safety, training, and unionization in their workplace.

Issues ranged greatly and include such topics as precariousness, training, co-workers, unions, participation, responsibility and reprisals. Precariousness becomes an issue since injuries likely occur because contingent workers are found to be less familiar with workplace safety and training related to dangerous job tasks (Cummings & Kreiss, 2008). The more workers, such as TSA employees, repeat a specific job and at specific locations, the more experience, knowledge and familiarity they will gain (Cummings & Kreiss, 2008). Precariousness has also led to financial strains for some respondents of this study, and has also led to issues with co-workers. Since there is a high turnover rate, co-workers can be inexperienced which in this study has led to employees expressing health and safety concerns regarding their co-workers. TSA workers are less likely to receive training and when training is provided there are problems with the adequacy of such training. This was also supported with past studies such as that by Kochan et al, (1994) who have discovered the same issue. Participation also needs to be improved and this can take place through unions which has been shown to greatly improve various aspects of participation (Johnstone et al., 2005; Gunningham, 2008). Unfortunately this study suggests that a TSA union in Sudbury may be failing to represent and improve things for their workers and is likely an issue with the union itself and not necessarily with all unions in this industry.

Perhaps with a better union, or a union for those not unionized, TSA employees would have a better voice in their workplace and also be aware of the responsibilities at all levels along with their rights against reprisals. Respondents for the majority were unaware of who is responsible for their health and safety as well as who to contact in the case of an injury. All

parties have different responsibilities in the workplace, client companies, TSAs and first aid are to be contacted in the case of an injury, and reprisals for any act of health and safety are strictly forbidden, all of which can be found in the OHSA (Ministry of Labour, 2003).

Despite the barriers and limitations of this research, I am confident in the findings and suggestions in this study. I am proud to present this research to interested parties, especially those in this industry who can potentially make meaningful changes. It is the hope that this research is read and considered in a way that will direct future studies or inflict meaningful change. The mining sector is extremely important to Sudbury and its economy, although there needs to be equal importance placed upon the health and safety of all employees in this sector, including TSA workers.

### Concluding Limitations

There are clear issues regarding generalizability with this study, therefore any statements or findings that I have made are merely suggestions. This study is specific to the Sudbury region and the TSA surface mining sector. Any connections made to other TSA industries or to different geographical locations could be found useful under similar circumstances and industry, although this is not recommended. There is also an issue with the convenience sampling method used for the sake of this study. Ideally, social research should aspire to use a random sample of participants so that issues with bias can be limited and generalizations can be made. A random sample accomplishes generalizability by giving everyone from the population an equal chance to participate (Bryman, Teevan & Bell, 2009). This also helps to remove any particular bias that a non-random sample may generate (Bryman et al. 2009). Perhaps those who agreed to participate in the study have done so because they are upset with their employer and wish to express their

concerns. In this case, those who agreed to participate may all hold a negative bias towards the TSA industry. Additionally, respondents all mainly worked for the same TSA, and a proportionate and representative sample would have been ideal. There is also an issue with the sample size.

Gaining numerous interviews would have been ideal for my study although due to the issues faced in this research this was impossible. The issues of gaining participants may have been from TSA employee fears of reprisals. While trying to gain participants, some of the participants interviewed asked fellow workers to participate, and while approached individuals had plenty to vent about regarding the topics of this study, they refrained from participating out of fear that their employer would find out and that they would be reprimanded. It is a hope that this study encourages others to further pursue this meaningful research topic while also removing barriers to such research and finding a better method of gaining participants.

Although there are only eight respondents in this study this is satisfactory for exploratory research. In this case this study only begins to open up possibilities of how TSA workers perceive their health, safety and training specific to Sudbury's surface mining sector. Future research can expand on this study, either by gaining more participants, or by exploring one of the main themes of this study in greater detail. Unfortunately, gaining access to these participants has been an extremely difficult task due to resistance from within the management of this industry. Perhaps future research can also explore the difficulty of conducting this type of health and safety research and try to understand why such difficulty exists. Either way, the findings and the voices of the respondents within this study have provided valuable insight that should be considered and further explored.

## Recommendations

As stated, this study does not have the sample size or the sampling method required for generalization and is merely to give suggestions of possible issues and solutions. The issues and recommendations that are posed in this section come directly from the respondents and should be considered by those who may find this information of benefit and value. It is often difficult for employees of various industries to voice concerns to their employers and in this case this study has allowed at least eight respondents to speak up. Below is a list of problems as found throughout the interviews, and each issue is followed by explanations and possible solutions.

- **Precariousness**

- Respondents reported issues with unstable work where they would find themselves working steady at some points and then have no work for months at a time.
- There is also a discussion of a large turnover rate within this industry which becomes a health and safety issue due to a lack of familiarity with job tasks and co-workers.
- TSAs can try and maintain smaller groups of employees and try to have such groups working similar jobs and at similar workplaces as much as possible.

- **Training and Financial Issues**

- It was revealed that some respondents had to pay for some of their training while others had the same training covered by their TSA.
- Some respondents were paid hourly for their training while others were not.



- In order to keep things fair, all employees should be paid hourly for their training and have their training paid for. If TSAs are asking their employees for this training then it should be covered.
  - Paying for training becomes a legal debate since the OSHA explains that employers need to supply training that involves the health and safety of employees. NORCAT should be considered under this rule and be covered financially by the TSA.
  - Costs associated with training employees was seen as a reason for the lack of paid training from TSAs and is understandable.
  - TSAs can either incorporate costs into their contracts with client companies as they have apparently done so in the past.
  - TSAs can also keep training costs down by trying to decrease their employee turnover rate.
- 
- **Inadequate Training**
    - All respondents had described inadequacy with at least one type of training they had received.
    - Training was also perceived as being better at client companies.
    - Issues with the training involved training feeling rushed, frequently dry and computer based, low quality, not frequent enough, lack of interaction, and tests being too easy.

- Improvements can include having more hands on training, more interaction with an instructor, less computer based training, make tests harder and so that workers can fail, give refreshers more frequently, and spend more time on certain training.
- TSAs can also try to partner with mining client companies since they provide training more often and possibly of better quality according to the respondents.

- **Responsibility**

- There was a large variation from respondents regarding who is responsible for their safety in the workplace.
- There was only one clear correct answer when respondents were asked who they would contact in the case of an emergency.
- TSA employees should have some training where they review important sections of the OHSA such as sections on responsibility and contacts during an injury.

- **Safety on the Job**

- Respondents reported that they felt safe at their work, although it was due to their own ability and willingness to ask questions, look for hazards and correct them.
- Respondents expressed concern for their co-workers as they were seen as hazards to their health.
- Workers have a right to know the hazards of their work which should be communicated by their employer and not discovered on their own when possible.
- Both client companies and the TSAs have the legal responsibility of protecting TSA workers according to the OHSA.

- TSAs and client companies can take more initiative to show concern for TSA workers. They can do so by evaluating worksites in depth before workers arrive and make workers aware of the dangers and also of the hazards that were corrected or minimized by the employer or client.
  - TSAs can better screen their employees before hiring them and also witness their working habits for their first few weeks working for the TSA.
  - Keeping a low turnover rate would also be ideal so that workers can gain more knowledge and experience of their workplace.
- 
- **Having a Voice in the Workplace**
    - The OHSA points out that workers have the right to participate in workplace health, safety and training.
    - TSA workers revealed issues with being able to speak to someone regarding their concerns, and even when able to talk to someone, their concerns are not always taken seriously.
    - There was also mention of TSAs encouraging not speaking up regarding health and safety issues and that workers can even receive reprisals for doing so.
    - Reprisals are illegal under the OHSA and should be taken seriously.
    - TSAs and client companies should take the health and safety concerns of TSA workers more seriously by listening to concerns and also addressing them.
    - Having a clear system of documenting problems and following up with workers could be a possible solution.

- **TSA Union**

- Some respondents who were unionized had no idea.
- Some respondents who were unionized were aware of the union although they expressed issues with the union and referred to this union as a joke.
- The union is apparently failing to do their job representing and protecting workers, the union does not offer adequate means of communication with the workers, and they additionally have no presence in the workplace.
- The solution would be to create steward positions and visit worksites and employees often.
- The union should also offer an adequate way of communicating with workers and also fight for the workers.
- If this is really a problem then it is serious and workers should be made aware that they can file complaints against this union through the OLRB.

## References

- Aronsson, G. (2009). Contingent workers and health and safety. *Work Employment and Society*, 13 (3): **439-459**
- Autor, D. (2001). Why do temporary help firms provide free general skills training? *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 116(4): 1409-1448
- Bailey, G. & Gayle, N. (2003). *Social theory: essential readings 2<sup>nd</sup> ED*. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press.
- Beck, Ulrich (1999). *World risk society*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers Inc.
- Beck, Ulrich (2000). *The brave new world of work*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers Inc.
- Booth, A., Francesconi, M. & Frank, J. (2002). Temporary jobs: Stepping stones or dead ends? *The Economic Journal*, 112: 189-213
- Brym, R. (2002). *Society in question 2<sup>nd</sup> ED*. Scarborough, ON: Nelson
- Bryman, A., Teevan, J., & Bell, E. (2009). *Social research methods: Second Canadian edition*. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press.
- Carroll, William (2006). Marx's method and the contributions of institutional ethnography. In Frampton, C., Kinsman, G., Thompson, A., and Tilleczeck, K. (Eds). *Sociology for changing the world: social movements/social research*. Black Point, NS: Fernwood (pp. 233-245)
- Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (2002). *The changing organization of work and the safety and health of working people: Knowledge gaps and research directions*. Cincinnati, OH: NIOSH
- City of Greater Sudbury (2012). Annual financial report 2012. Retrieved November 17, 2014

from:

[http://www.greatersudbury.ca/sudburyen/assets/File/2012%20Annual%20Financial%20Report\(1\).pdf](http://www.greatersudbury.ca/sudburyen/assets/File/2012%20Annual%20Financial%20Report(1).pdf)

Connelly, C. & Gallagher, D. (2004). Emerging trends in contingent work research. *Journal of Management*, 30(6): 959–983

Cummings, K. & Kreiss, K. (2008). Contingent workers and contingent health: risks of a modern economy. *JAMA*, 299 (4): 448-450

DeStefano, D. (2008). *Sudbury-North Bay Mining Supply Corridor Growing*. Retrieved November 17, 2014 from: <http://www.republicofmining.com/2008/06/06/sudbury-north-bay-supply-corridor-growing-dick-destefano/#more-274>

De Vaus, D. (2012). *Research design in social research*. London, UK: Sage Publications

Donoghue, A. (2004). Occupational health hazards in mining. *Occupational Medicine*, 54: 283-289

Eubanks, P. & Abbott, C (2003). Using focus groups to supplement the assessment of technical communication texts, programs, and courses. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 12: 25-45

Fabiano, B., Curro, F., Reverberi, A. & Pastorino, R. (2008). A statistical study on temporary work and occupational accidents: Specific risk factors and risk management strategies. *Safety Science*, 46: 535-544

Frampton, C., Kinsman, G., Thompson, A., and Tilleczek, K. (2006). Social movements/social research: towards political activist ethnography. In Frampton, C., Kinsman, G., Thompson, A., and Tilleczek, K. (Eds.). *Sociology for changing the world: social movements/social research*. Black Point, NS: Fernwood (pp. 1-17)

- Galarneau, D. (2010). *Temporary employment in the downturn*. Retrieved March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2015 from: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/75-001-x/2010111/article/11371-eng.htm#a4>
- Giddens, A. (2000). *Runaway world*. New York, NY: Routledge
- Government of Ontario (2014). About Ontario. Retrieved November 17, 2014 from: <http://www.ontario.ca/government/about-ontario#section-4>
- Groves, W., Kecojevic, V. and Lomljenovic, D. (2007). Analysis of fatalities and injuries involving mining equipment. *Journal of Safety Research*, 38: 461-470
- Gunningham, N. (2008). Occupational health and safety, worker participation and the mining industry in a changing world of work. *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, 29 (3): 336-361
- Gyekye, S. (2015). Workers perception of workplace safety and job satisfaction. *International Journal of Safety and Ergonomics*, 11(3): 291-302
- Haldane, S. (2013). Safety and health in mining in Canada. In Elgstrand, K. & Vingard, E. (Eds.). *Occupational safety and health in mining: Anthology on the situation in 16 mining countries*. Gothenburh, Sweden: University of Gothenburg.
- Holloway, John (2003). *Change the world without taking power: the meaning of revolution today*. London: UK
- Howe, W. (1986). Temporary help workers. *Monthly Labour Review*, November: 45-47
- Johnstone, R., Quinlan, M. & Walters, D. (2005), Statutory occupational health and safety workplace arrangements for the modern labour market. *The Journal of Industrial Relations*, 47: 93–116
- Johnstone, R., Mayhew, C. & Quinlan, M. (2000-2001). Outsourcing risk: the regulation of

- occupational health and safety where subcontractors are employed. *Comparative Labor Law and Policy Journal*, 22 (2/3): 351-394
- Kalleberg, A. L. (2000). Nonstandard employment relations: part-time, temporary and contract work. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 26: 341–365.
- Kinsman, G. (2006). *Mapping social relations of struggle: activism, ethnography, social organization*. In Frampton, C., Kinsman, G., Thompson, A., and Tilleczeck, K. (Eds). *Sociology for changing the world: social movements/social research*. Black Point, NS: Fernwood (pp. 133-156)
- Kochan, T., Smith, M., Wells, J. & Rebitzer, J. (1994). Human resource strategies and contingent workers: the case of safety and health in the petrochemical industry. *Human Resource Management*, 33 (1): 55-77
- Kvasnicka, M. (2008). *Does temporary help work provide a stepping stone to regular employment?* Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic research.
- Mangum, G., Mayall, D. & Nelson, K. (1985). The temporary help industry: A response to the dual internal labour market. *Industrial and Labour Relations Review*, 38(4): 599-611
- Marx, K. (1845). *Theses on Feuerbach*. In Simon, L (Eds). Karl Marx: selected writings. Indianapolis, IN : Hackett Publishing Company Inc. (pp. 98-101)
- Marx, K. (1869). *Economics and philosophic manuscripts (Selections)*. In Simon, L (Eds). Karl Marx: selected writings. Indianapolis, IN : Hackett Publishing Company Inc. (pp. 54-97)
- Marx, K. (1932). *The eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte (excerpts)*. In Simon, L (Eds). Karl Marx: selected writings. Indianapolis, IN : Hackett Publishing Company Inc. (pp. 187-208)
- Middleton, J. (1996-1997). Contingent workers in a changing economy: endure, adapt, or organize. *N.Y.U. Review of Law and Social Change*, 22: 557



- Mills, C. Wright (1959). *The sociological imagination*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press
- Ministry of Labour (2003). *Occupational health and safety act and regulations for mines and mining plants*. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario
- Ministry of Labour (2014). Profile of Ontario's mining sector. Retrieved November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2014 from: <http://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/pubs/miningprogress/profile.php>
- Ministry of Labour (2015). Temporary help agency assignment workers: know you're occupational health and safety duties. Retrieved February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2015 from: [http://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/sawo/pubs/fs\\_tha\\_worker.php](http://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/sawo/pubs/fs_tha_worker.php)
- Ministry of Labour (2015b). Rights and duties. Retrieved February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2015 from: <http://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/faqs/rights.php#what1>
- Polivka, A. (1996). Contingent and alternative work arrangements, defined. *Monthly Labour Review*, 119 (10): 3-9
- Quinlan, M. (1999). The implications of labour market restructuring in industrialized societies for occupational health and safety. *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, 20(3): 427-460
- Quinlan, M. & Bohle, P. (2004). Contingent work and occupational safety. In Barling, J. & Frone, M. (Eds.), *The psychology of workplace safety*: 81–105. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Ritzer, G (2002). *The McDonaldization thesis: is expansion inevitable?*. In Brym, R. (Ed.). *Society in question 2<sup>nd</sup> ED*. Scarborough, ON: Nelson (pp. 216-225)
- Sears, A. & Cairns, J. (2010). *A good book in theory: making sense through inquiry 2<sup>nd</sup> ED*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.
- Simon, L. (1994). *Karl Marx: selected writings*. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company Inc.

- Smith, Dorothy (1997). Consciousness, meaning, and ruling relations: from women's standpoint. In Abu-Lughod, J (Eds.). *Millennial Milestone: the heritage and future of sociology in the North America region*. Toronto, ON: Proceedings of the ISA regional conference for North America. (pp. 37-50)
- Smith, Dorothy (1999). *Writing the social: critique, theory, and investigations*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press
- Smith, Dorothy (2006). Political activist as ethnographer and sociology for people. In Frampton, C., Kinsman, G., Thompson, A., and Tilleczeck, K. (Eds.). *Sociology for changing the world: social movements/social research*. Black Point, NS: Fernwood (pp. 18-26)
- Turner, N., Chmiel, N., Hershcovis, M., Sandy, Walls, M. (2010). Life on the line: Job demands, perceived co-worker support for safety, and hazardous work events. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 15(4): 482-493
- Virtanen, M., Kivimaki, M., Joensuu, M., Virtanen, P., Elovainio, M. & Vahtera, J. (2005). Temporary employment and health: A review. *International Journal of Epidemiology*, 34: 6-10-622
- Zeytinoglu, I. U. (1999). *Changing work relationships in industrialized economies*. Amsterdam, NL: John Benjamins Publishing.

## Appendix A

### Interview Guide

A) Are you currently working for a temporary staffing agency?

a. If yes:

i) Which one?

ii) Approximately how many hours do you work per month?

b. If no: when was the last time you worked for one?

i) Which one did you work for?

ii) When you were working, how often did you work per month?

B) What types of training did you require in order to begin work in surface mining?

a. Examples: General orientation (NORCAT), Fall Arrest, respirator fit test?

b. Did you ever have to pay for any of your training?

i) Which ones did you have to pay for and how much did they cost?

ii) If paid for their own training:

1. Why did you have to pay for your own training?

2. Do you feel that you should have to pay for your training?

3. What types of problems does paying for your own training create for you if

any?

C) Has there ever been a situation where your employer has asked you to get training for a specific job and then after getting the training, you were never given work?

a. If not: is there any training that you have had that you have never been able to use?

i) Please tell me about this?

b. If yes: has this negatively impacted you in any way?

i) Probe: have you lost valuable time or money?

D) Is there any training that you have been given that you feel was inadequate?

a. If yes:

i) How many were inadequate?

ii) Can you please explain the training, ex: what kind of training? Was it for a particular job?

iii) In what way(s)?

iv) How can this training be improved?

v) Who administered the training program(s)?

b. If no:

i) How many were adequate?

ii) What was it about the training that made it/them adequate?

1. Probe: was there anything about the training that stood out in a good way?

Did the training do a good job of address the specific needs of the training?

iii) Who administered the training program(s)?

E) Who do you believe is responsible for your health and safety as a temporary staffing worker? The staffing agency, the contractor you work for, or the company whose property you work on?

a. Why?

b. Have you been injured before?

i) If yes: what happened? How was it taken care off? Who was responsible?

1. Probe: Who did you notify first? What parties were be involved? In the end, who was found responsible for your injury?

ii) If no then: theoretically, if you were working at the Xstrata or Vale smelter and got injured due to a lack of training, how would the scenario play out?

1. Probe: Who would you notify first? What parties would be involved? In the end, who would be found responsible for your injury?

F) How do you feel about the training and/or knowledge of your fellow temporary staffing workers when working together?

a. Probe: Do you feel they are knowledgeable of the work you all must perform? Do you feel that they work safely or do you feel that they are a hazard to their health and safety, and/or the health and safety of yourself and other workers?

i) If so, how and in what ways?

G) In general, do you feel:

a. Safe at work?

i) If no: how come? How could this be changed?

b. That the training you receive is adequate for you to work safely and perform the job properly?

i) If no: how come? How could this be changed?

c. That the training your co-workers receive is adequate for them to work safely and perform the job properly?

i) If no: how come? How could this be changed?

d. That you are able to participate in health, safety and training in your workplace?

H) What is your temporary staffing agency doing:

a. Right in terms of health, safety, and training, that other companies could learn from?

b. Wrong in terms of health, safety, and training that should be improved upon?

I) Is your temporary staffing agency unionized?

a. If yes:

i) Which union?

ii) Do you feel that union is a benefit to your employment?

1. Probe: In terms of improving health, safety, and training? Do they help the employees concerns be heard in the workplace?

iii) Do you know who your union steward is?

iv) How has your past communication with the union been?

1. If good: why or how so?

2. If no: why not?

3. If mixed: please explain?

v) Overall, how do you feel about the role of unions?

b. If no:

i) Do you feel that union would be a benefit to your employment?

1. Probe: In terms of improving health, safety, and training? Would they help the employees concerns be heard in the workplace?

ii) Overall, how do you feel about unions?

J) Is there anything else you would like to share that has not been covered so far in relation to health, safety, training, and unionization?

Thank you very much for your time, this concludes the interview.

## Appendix B

### CONSENT FORM (Interview)



**Laurentian University**  
**Université Laurentienne**

#### **Perceptions of Health and Safety in Surface Mining Operations: A Study of Temporary Workers Employed through Staffing Agencies in Sudbury**

Hello,

I am a graduate student in the applied social research program at Laurentian University, and I am conducting research as part of a requirement for my degree. The purpose of my study is to give temporary staffing agency workers the ability to voice their concerns that may be heard by employers should they read my final report. The Research will hopefully be able to uncover the experience and mindset of topics such as health and safety, training, unionization, and workplace participation.

If you decide to participate, you will be required to take part in a one on one interview. The time required for the interview will vary depending on the length of your responses. The interview will be recorded so that I do not miss any important information that you provide during this interview. Your name will not be included anywhere in the recording or transcription and consent forms will be stored in a lockbox. Consent forms will be destroyed following the completion of the research and the interview recordings will be erased once transcribing has been completed.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law.

Your participation is voluntary. I would really value your participation, but you are under absolutely no obligation to participate in the interview if you would prefer not to. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time without penalty. You are also free to not respond to questions you are uncomfortable providing an answer for, these questions may be skipped.

This project should be completed no later than April 30th, 2015. If you have any concerns about this project, or if you would like to examine a copy of the final report, please contact my supervisor, Dr. Parveen Nangia, at 675-1151, extension 4231.

Should you require to speak with someone not attached to this research regarding ethical issues or complaints then you may do so through the following contact information:

**Research Ethics Officer, Laurentian University Research Office, telephone: 705-675-1151 ext 3213, 2436 or toll free at 1-800-461-4030 or email: [ethics@laurentian.ca](mailto:ethics@laurentian.ca).**

Should you volunteer, your name will go into a draw for one of three Tim Horton's gift cards valued at \$10 each.

Thank you for your time!

Jordan Babando, BA Sociology, CTF Labour Studies

Department of Sociology- Laurentian University

935 Ramsey Lake Rd. Sudbury, ON, CAN.

P3E 2C6

Email: [jx\\_babando@laurentian.ca](mailto:jx_babando@laurentian.ca)

I agree to participate in the interview and give my consent to record this interview:

Signature of participant: \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix C

### Useful Resources

#### **WSIB**

30 Cedar Street  
Sudbury, ON  
P3E 1A4  
Phone: 416-344-1000  
Phone: 1-800-387-0750  
Fax: 1-888-313-7373 / 416-344-4684

#### **Ministry of Labour Health and Safety**

Toll-free: 1-877-202-0008  
TTY: 1-855-653-9260  
Fax: 905-577-1316

#### **Collective Bargaining Information Services**

400 University Avenue, 8th Floor  
Toronto ON M7A 1T7  
416-326-1260  
Fax: 416-326-1277

#### **Dispute Resolution Services**

400 University Avenue, 8th Floor  
Toronto ON M7A 1T7  
416-326-7575  
Fax: 416-314-8755

#### **Occupational Therapy Services North**

Address: 126 Elm St #7  
Sudbury, ON  
P3C 1T6

## Appendix D

### Variable Definitions

**Surface Mining:** Not to be confused with surface mineral extraction such as through open pit mining. Surface mining for the sake of this study refers to surface mining operations such as the smelting, refining, and processing of ore. These surface mining operations are often referred smelter sites.

**Perceptions of health and safety:** How participants view their workplace health and safety according to their responses to all related health and safety questions during the interview.

**Perceptions of unions:** How participants view unions in their workplace according to their responses on during the interview. Are they unionized? Do they believe unions are a good thing in their field of work?

**Ability to voice concerns:** How participants view their ability to discuss their concerns within their workplace according to their response to questions of health and safety participation and communication with management.

**Injury reporting:** How injuries are reported and what procedures are followed. This is determined during the interview when I give participants an injury scenario and ask them to comment on the steps involved.

**Perceptions of training:** How participants view their workplace training according to their responses from their interview. Questions revolve around quality, necessity and costs of training.

**Age:** participant's biological age.

**Gender:** This is simply a gender dichotomy based on biological sex. While I recognize that multiple and varying genders are possible, my past experience with leaving an open ended option has led to responses that weaken the credibility of various respondents. An example is a respondent identifying as a fish or a Vulcan. In this case I will simply discuss with the participant before the interview which gender they identify with and make note of it.

**Employer:** Identification of a respondent's main temporary staffing agency employer.

**Workplace relations:** How workers communicate and operate in relation to their temporary staffing agency, clients, and various workplace locations.

**Unionization:** the presence of a recognized worker organizing body within a participant's workplace.

**Variability of work:** the amount of various jobs participants often take on. For example, while participants may often work at a single location, they may work multiple jobs from one week to the next.

## Appendix E



## Appendix F

### List of Abbreviations

AMI	Andre Marcotte Incorporated
LRBO	Labour Relations Board of Ontario
MOL	Ministry of Labour
NES	Northern Employment Solutions
NFPA	National Fire Prevention Association
OHSA	Occupational Health and Safety Act
SCBA	Self Contained Breathing Apparatus
TPS	Total Personnel Solutions
TSA	Temporary Staffing Agency
USW	United Steel Workers
WHMIS	Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System
WSIB	Workers Safety and Insurance Board
ZES	Zero Energy State